

Dersingham Parish Council

Equal Opportunities Policy

Dersingham Parish Council supports the principle of equal opportunity in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation as well as pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The employment related sections of this policy therefore concern all matters directly or indirectly related to employment affecting individuals or groups whether they are actual or potential employees. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that all employment related decisions are based solely on objective, justifiable and job-related criteria.

The Council is committed not only to the legal obligations placed upon it by equalities legislation but also to the positive promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of employment. With this in mind, the Council will ensure that all its employment policies, procedures, guidelines and practices reflect and reinforce its commitment to equality. Our aim is to create a working environment which is supportive and prejudice free. To achieve this aim we will undertake the actions in the following areas:

A. Recruitment, Selection and Appointment

The Council will:

1. Have open, fair and consistent arrangements for the recruitment, selection and appointment of employees, this will:

- a) Ensure all advertised posts have a clear and up-to-date job description and a personal specification which outlines the skills, qualifications and experience required to undertake the job. Both the job description and personal specification will only include requirements that are necessary and justified for the effective performance of the job.
- b) Ensure advertisements for posts provide sufficient, clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post in a manner which does not restrict its audience in terms of any potentially discriminatory factor.
- c) Produce recruitment literature which is clear and bias free, including sending a copy of the Equality in Employment policy to all job applicants.
- d) Require all job applicants to complete a standard job application form and requesting monitoring information via a separate monitoring form.
- e) Ensure the selection criteria used to determine candidates shortlisted for interview, and the successful candidate for a post, is based only on the

information contained within the job description and personal specification for the position.

- f) Ensure there are no barriers which discourage applications from any section of the community

2. Comply with the legislative requirements with regards the employment of ex-offenders.

3. Comply with the requirements of the Asylum and Immigration Act with regards ensuring job applicants are eligible to work in the UK

4. Ensure that promotions are determined on the basis of ability and other relevant objective job related criteria.

B. Learning, Training and Development

The Council will:

1. Recognise the need to provide a range of learning, development and training opportunities to all employees and Members, regardless of gender, race, disability, age or any other potentially unfair criteria, to ensure that their potential is harnessed with a view to achieving improvements in performance and service delivery.

2. Commit to developing its employees and Members in order to achieve its aims and objectives.

3. Develop its employees in order to improve performance.

4. Encourage all employees to discuss the training and development needs at least annually as part of the Council's performance appraisal process.

5. Provide training to ensure Members and employees are aware of their responsibilities with regards equalities, to include:

- training for new recruits via induction
- training for Members
- training on specific equalities issues as required to support this Policy

6. Review training and development procedures to ensure there are no barriers which prevent employees from potentially disadvantaged groups accessing opportunities.

C. Working Environment

The Council will:

1. Ensure its employees are treated with dignity and respect and take steps to ensure this right is protected.

2. Ensure staff and Members are aware that they are required to treat all staff and colleagues with respect.

3. Under no circumstances, condone harassment of any nature. We will undertake to investigate all complaints of harassment fully and as quickly as possible.

Investigations will be totally confidential and, when a complaint is found to be justified, disciplinary action will be taken.

Harassment can take many forms, occur on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or a group of individuals. Harassment may, however, be summarised as conduct which is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. It is not the intention of the perpetrator but the deed itself and the impact on the recipient which determines what constitutes harassment.

Bullying is defined as unreasonable, offensive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines confidence and which may cause stress which is unconnected with race, sex or disability.

D. Conditions of Employment

The Council will:

1. Ensure all employees are aware of this Policy. Changes and updates to the policy will be discussed with members and employees.

2. Ensure all Members and employees are familiar with this Policy and the Council's 'Code of Conduct' and conduct themselves in accordance with these requirements.

3. Ensure all employees receive regular performance appraisal. Assessments of performance will be based solely on job requirements and individual ability.

4. Give consideration to requests from employees to adjust working times or practices to accommodate religious needs.

5. Put in place any reasonable adjustment required by an employee who becomes disabled during employment, or for a new employee who has a disability.

6. Consider requests from employees for reduced or amended working hours to accommodate external requirements.

Adopted by Full Council on: 27.07.26