



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Equal Opportunities

Adopted May 2021

Review Due May 2023

Signed _____

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Merton Parish Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities throughout all areas of its business. Everyone will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

ABOUT THIS POLICY

This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination. It applies to all aspects of the council's business, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, termination of employment, website accessibility, public participation and transparency.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, agency workers and members of the public.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?

The Parish Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law.

All members and appointed persons must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that others adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Members and appointed persons will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Parish Clerk to request training or further information.

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Parish Council.

Everyone is invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Parish Clerk

DISCRIMINATION

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, visitors and members of public. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts) and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation..

TRAINING AND PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Equal consideration will be given to all employees, members and volunteers for training and development.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

DISABILITIES

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties because of your disability, you may wish to contact the clerk and/or the chair to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The council may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments if you regular work for the council either in an employed or volunteer capacity. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

PART-TIME AND FIXED-TERM WORK

Part-time, fixed-term staff and volunteers should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions, unless different treatment is justified.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against anyone who complains about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.