



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

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## **Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

Billingham Town Council values the diversity of the community we serve. We therefore strive to ensure that our services reflect the needs of all people within the community. All individuals can expect to receive equal access to employment and our services.

Our Commitment under this Equality & Diversity Framework is:

### **As an employer we will:**

- Ensure that our recruitment and selection procedures are fair and equitable.
- Train all employees who participate in recruitment
- Monitor our workforce
- Make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to minimise barriers to employment faced by disabled people
- Provide a working environment where harassment and bullying is unacceptable behaviour and will be challenged
- Consult with employees regarding the development of this strategy
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

### **As a service provider we will:**

- Minimise the barriers faced by people using our building and facilities
- Train all staff to recognise the diverse needs of the people we serve
- Produce a range of information about our services and make that information available in various formats, if requested
- Provide a mechanism through our Complaints or Grievance procedure for employees and service users to express their view about our services.

## **Responsibility**

This policy applies to all employees and elected members of the Council.

All employees and elected members of the Council are expected to treat each other and members of the public equally irrespective of their gender, race, disability, age, gender, reassignment, sex or sexual orientation, Religion or Belief, Marriage & Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity.

The Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to by all staff and members.

Employees will be made fully aware of this policy and without exception must adhere to its requirements. Any employee who feels that they have grounds for complaint in relation to discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation has the right to pursue their complaint through the relevant internal policies.

New employees and job applicants will be informed of the existence of this policy during recruitment and a copy will be provided as part of the induction information.

## **Training**

The Council is committed to the on-going development of its employees. The principles of equality and fairness must be applied in considering training programmes for individuals within the Council.

The Council will endeavour to provide suitable training relevant to the current and future needs of the individual and the Council. All employees will be given the opportunity to discuss their training needs and the Council will endeavour to organise appropriate training programmes.

The Council will, within the resources available, introduce procedures within its training programme to assist the implementation of its policy in such areas as staff development, information to members/employees on recruitment practices, and service provision.

## **Complaints procedure**

Internal and external job applicants who think they have been unfairly treated during the recruitment process should direct their complaints to the Executive Officer, who will initiate and monitor appropriate action.

The provisions of this policy will be covered by the Council's established grievance procedure.

Employees who feel that they have been discriminated against in relation to recruitment, promotion, training opportunities or any other employment terms on the grounds of sex, race, religion, marital status, age or disability should pursue their complaint through the Council's Grievance Procedure. During this process, employees will retain their individual statutory rights should they wish to pursue the complaint further.

In respect of complaints from prospective employees who feel they have suffered any kind of harassment, as detailed above, they should pursue their complaint through the Council's complaints procedure. During the process, individuals will retain their individual statutory rights should they wish to pursue their complaint further.

Any employee who commits an act of discrimination or personal harassment will be liable to disciplinary action.

## **Provision of Services to the Community**

Provision of services to the community will be based on principles of fairness and accessibility to all sections of the community.

The Council will comply with the guidance set out in the Code of Practice in force from time to time under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the provision of goods, facilities or services to the community.

The Council will seek to ensure that all its services are published widely and that, as far as reasonably possible, the timing of events and access to facilities are designed to ensure that minority groups are not discriminated against.

The Council will seek to consult the community and the community's representatives wherever possible when it proposes changes to its services.

An Equality and Diversity Policy has benefits for employers, as well as responsibilities, as detailed below.

- Fair treatment in all aspects of employment
- Right to raise a grievance if employees feel that they have been discriminated against
- Employees are responsible within the policy for providing equal opportunities to both staff and members of the council and the public.

The commitment of all employees is important in order that the policy can be effective. Staff who may have concerns should contact the Executive Officer for advice.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring systems will be developed and maintained by the Executive Officer and periodic reports will be presented to the appropriate Committee.

Employees who attempt to abuse this policy may face disciplinary action.

### **Equality & Diversity Statement**

Billingham Town Council is fully committed to equality of opportunity in employment and in the way we deliver our services.

We recognise that equality is part of achieving efficiency, effectiveness and value for money in the way we use resources, including the way we recruit, employ and manage. We will ensure that all employees are valued and equality practices become integral to the way we work throughout the Council.

This policy seeks to:

- Enhance and promote high quality services which are responsive to the needs of service users, partners and stakeholders.
- Assist in creating a productive and prejudice free working environment which treats all employees fairly and with respect.
- Demonstrate and promote a commitment to equality by challenging discrimination and valuing diversity amongst employees.
- Improve the motivation, performance, skills and moral of the workforce.

We acknowledge that equal opportunities is the responsibility of every employee and member within the Council.

The Councils commitment to equality of opportunity will ensure that no potential or current employee or anyone using our service will receive less favourable treatment because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

All employees will be made fully aware of this Policy and without exception must adhere to its requirements. Any employee who feels that they have grounds for complaint in relation to discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation has the right to pursue their complaint through the relevant internal policies and procedures.