

Wickford Town Council

Equal Opportunities Policy

Legal Position

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”.

Purpose

The Town Council (the Council) is committed to the principles and promotion of equal opportunities. It has a role to play in the promotion of equal opportunities in the community, both as an employer and as a service provider to the residents of Wickford.

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all members of the Council, employees, volunteers and the users of the Council services and ensure that they are treated with fairness and consistency, free from discrimination.

The Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimization or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Scope

Everyone is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

Breaches of the Council’s equal opportunities policy will be taken seriously and duly investigated.

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council.

The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity

Statement of Policy

The overall objectives of the Policy are:

- to recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and if appropriate, disciplinary action;
- to prevent direct and indirect discrimination in all areas of employment, service provision and delivery in respect of sex, race, marital or family status, religion, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, age or sexual orientation;
- to examine and wherever possible enhance equality of opportunity at all points of contact with service users;
- wherever possible to consult service users on the effectiveness of the policy and possible improvements;
- to ensure that employees, volunteers and Councillors are fully conversant with the Policy and received training if necessary.

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Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. The Council will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions;

Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy;

Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications;

The Council will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies;

The Council will not confine their recruitment to areas of media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group;

All applicants who apply for jobs with the Council will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job;

All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate;

Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible;

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature;

The Council will not disqualify any applicant because he/she/they is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job;

Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of the job.

Training and Promotion

All promotion will be in line with this policy.

Monitoring

The Council shall annually review service operations in order to ensure adherence to the Policy.

Monitoring may involve:

- a. the collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applicants and current employees;
- b. the examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
- c. recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

Complaints

Complaints made under this Policy should be addressed in writing to the Town Clerk. Any complaints received will be reported to the Council at its next meeting and duly investigated.

Date effective from:	29 June 2022
Review date:	30 March 2026
Minute ref	26-533c
Next review:	March 2027