

# OUNDLE TOWN COUNCIL

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT & PROCEDURE

The Equal Opportunities Policy is the responsibility of the Town Council, and everybody working for the Council.

All Employees and applicants will be given Equal Opportunities in employment regardless of:

- Disability
- Age
- Gender or gender identity
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Trade union membership or activity
- Unrelated criminal convictions

All persons will be treated with dignity and respect in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Any complaints of this nature will be fully investigated and treated with the strictest confidence.

Any individual found to be responsible for such behaviour, following a thorough investigation, will be subject to disciplinary action.

All Employees, job applicants and contractors working for the Council will be made aware of this policy.

The policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it conforms to all relevant legislation.

### **POLICY AIMS**

To select, recruit, develop and promote the very best people through objective assessment based solely upon suitability for the job.

Ensure that all Employees and job applicants receive fair and Equal treatment.

Create a balanced work force, reflecting the diversity of the local working population.

Cultivating a working environment that is free from harassment.

### **DEFINITIONS**

<b>Direct Discrimination:-</b>	To treat someone less favourably on the basis of race, gender or disability; i.e. Not to recruit Refuse Opportunities Discipline Dismissal Provide less favourable terms and conditions.
<b>Indirect Discrimination</b>	Fewer females / ethnic minorities / disabled persons are able to fulfil a requirement of a job than other members of society, and the requirement cannot be justified.
<b>Harassment</b>	Creating a threatening, hostile or intimidating environment based upon sex or race of the victim. The decision as to whether actions constitute harassment lies with the person who is being subject to this behaviour and one single incident is sufficient to constitute a charge.

### **The Employer's Responsibility**

The Town Council is directly responsible for the actions of all its Employees and agents of the Council, as well as for their protection from harassment and discrimination. As such, the Council takes an active role in protecting those for whom it is responsible.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

### **Recruitment and Selection**

All positions are open to all individuals who have the required level of skill, knowledge and / or experience.

All job adverts are to be Council approved and placed in publications which have a diverse circulation.

All job applicants should receive a copy of the Equal policy and procedures, as well as a full job description to enable them to assess their suitability for the position.

### **Training**

Appropriate training on and off the job will be accessible to all Employees. All Employees will be encouraged to take advantage of all relevant training Opportunities.

Where an individual is returning to a job following a prolonged absence, additional training and support will be offered.

Where a position changes due to technology and / or reorganisation, appropriate training and support will be offered to the affected individuals.

All induction trainees will be made aware of the Council's Equal Opportunities policy and procedure.

### **Health and Safety**

Discrimination, intimidation and harassment can seriously compromise the Health and Safety of the work environment. As such it is the responsibility of all Employees who are aware of such activity to bring it to the attention of the Council's Management, quickly and discreetly (although the Council accepts that this may not always be easy for the victim). All reported incidents will be treated in confidence by Management.

Management will work with disabled Employees to ensure their Health and Safety in the workplace, through conducting through objective assessments of the safety of their working environment and where appropriate offering alterations / adaptations to the position, or examining the possibility of alternative work.

### **Development and Promotion.**

Ability, motivation, commitment, past experience and qualifications are the qualities used to determine an individual's promotion potential.

Development and training will be offered to all suitably motivated individuals where Opportunities exist.

Length of service will not determine suitability for promotion as it can indirectly discriminate against those who may have had long term illnesses or career breaks or are employed on a fixed term basis.

### **Terms and Conditions**

All individuals within a post will receive the same terms and conditions.

### **Redundancy**

The Council will select individuals for redundancy based on a points scheme, whose criteria will be determined with affected staff during the redundancy consultation period.

### **Discipline and Termination of Employment**

Race, gender, age and disability will have no bearing upon any disciplinary actions taken by the Council.

### **HOW THE PROCEDURE WORKS**

If you have a grievance relating to Equal Opportunities the Staff Handbook explains how to make an informal complaint or Formal Grievance to the Council's Management.

If you are accused of behaviour which is in breach of the Council's Equal Opportunities policy and procedure, a relevant line Manager will initially conduct an informal investigation to determine if there is a case worth investigating. Should the initial, informal investigation

find that action needs to be taken, the Council will act in accordance with its formal disciplinary procedure, as detailed in your Employment Contract.