



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Our Aims

Community

To encourage all sections of the local community to work with us to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the District for present and future generations

Employees

To provide a valued, motivated and appropriately trained workforce, working in a suitably resourced and safe environment

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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Wyre Forest District Council

Equality and Diversity Policy

1.0 Statement of Policy

Wyre Forest District Council ('The Council') recognises and celebrates the diverse nature of the people who live, work in and visit the Wyre Forest District and who work for the Council and its partners / contractors.

This Policy has been developed in consultation with Trade Unions and other representatives of employees, service users and relevant community organisations.

The Council:

- 1.1 is guided by its core value that people will be treated fairly and according to their needs
- 1.2 supports and promotes equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery
- 1.3 will endeavour to treat all people equally and fairly whether they are:
 - Current or past employees of the Council
 - Seeking employment with the Council
 - Users or potential users of the Council's services
 - Contracting to supply services or goods to the Council
 - Seeking assistance from the Council.
- 1.4 opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation
- 1.5 accepts that it has a unique and influential position in the community as a major employer and quality service provider. It also accepts that it has a moral obligation to bring about positive change through its extensive contact with the community and its grant-aiding powers for community organisations
- 1.6 The Council acknowledges without reservation its legal duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and other relevant legislation and will:
 - Interpret its powers and duties in accordance with the legislation
 - Not act in any way which is incompatible with the legislation
 - Make all policy and procedural decisions in accordance with the legislation

2.0 Employment

2.1 To ensure that the Council achieves its Corporate Aim of providing a 'valued, motivated and appropriately trained workforce, working in a suitably resourced and safe environment', it will:

- Be a fair and equal opportunity employer in all areas of employment, including recruitment, selection and career development, ensuring that individuals are selected and promoted according to their relevant merits and abilities
- Ensure that all employees involved with recruitment are appropriately trained to avoid unlawful discrimination
- Ensure that no job applicants receive less favourable treatment, unless there is a genuine occupational requirement for a restriction being placed on a particular post. (This would only be applied when all other employment options had been excluded.)
- Draw job applicants from the wider labour market to ensure that a diverse range of job seekers is made aware of the opportunities with the Council
- Make this Policy available to all job applicants and existing employees, Members and relevant organisations
- Take positive action wherever practicable to retain and redeploy existing employees who become disabled or who, on account of changes in personal circumstances, are unable to continue in their existing jobs
- Take all complaints from employees regarding discrimination, victimisation or harassment seriously by ensuring such incidents are investigated thoroughly and promptly
- Ensure as far as possible that the composition of our workforce reflects that of the local community and to take any steps permitted by law to help disadvantaged and under-represented groups to compete for jobs on a genuine basis of equality
- Ensuring that all job applicants and employees receive the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the Council and themselves
- Continually monitor and seek the views of employees from minority groups

- Undertake and maintain monitoring and regular analysis of internal records providing a basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Ensure that all employees receive equality and diversity training

2.2 Employment Contract

- On commencing employment with the Council, employees will be informed of their employment conditions with respect to wages and the circumstances of each payment in a clearly written format, or other format suitable for their needs.
- Unlawful deductions of wages are not permitted. Deductions permitted by relevant legislation will be made only with the express consent of the employee concerned.
- The Council recognises freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. National and other applicable laws and regulations concerning an individual's freedom of association will be complied with at all times.
- The Council will not discriminate against employees' legal bargaining representatives.

2.3 Working Hours

- The working hours of Council employees will comply with applicable laws.
- The Council does not encourage or condone excessive working hours, or working hours that are detrimental to an individual's health and wellbeing.
- Where possible working hours will allow employees to achieve a positive work-life balance, noting the needs of individuals.

2.4 Health Safety and Welfare

- The Council aims to ensure employees are able to work free of physical, psychological or verbal abuse, the threat of abuse and sexual or other harassment.
- The Council abides by its Health, Safety and Welfare Policy on the protection of all employees and other persons who might be affected by its undertaking.
- The Council will provide training as necessary for employees and Members.

3.0 Elected Members

- 3.1 Elected members are committed to equality and diversity and promoting the Council's work on diversity issues in the community.
- 3.2 The Council has a nominated Equality and Diversity Champion whose role is to inform and educate other elected Members and the public about the Council's equality and diversity aims and to share good practice.
- 3.3 Elected Members who may be involved with recruitment will be appropriately trained to avoid discrimination.
- 3.4 All Elected Members will receive Equality and Diversity awareness training.

4.0 Equality in Service Provision

The Council will:

- 4.1 Aim to ensure that citizens of all ages have the opportunity to enjoy and participate in cultural activities
- 4.2 Encourage all sections of the local community to work with it to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the District for present and future generations
- 4.2 Ensure its approach to customer service, quality and equality is relevant to all services and involves all employees who will be appropriately trained to avoid discrimination
- 4.3 Seek to serve all its customers and potential customers equally and fairly, and ensure that its policies and procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against any individual or group of people
- 4.4 Ensure that, wherever practicable, all public buildings and premises owned or occupied by the Council have access and other facilities for people with disabilities
- 4.5 Seek to respond to any special need requirements of any particular groups
- 4.6 Actively seek the views and opinions of minority ethnic populations in matters relating to service planning and delivery
- 4.7 Work to remove all cultural and linguistic barriers that may confront our customers, whose first language is not English.
- 4.8 Ensure that procurement of goods and services:

- is undertaken by contractors, suppliers and partners without unlawful discrimination
- includes all relevant standards and recognised national guidelines
- positively addresses all equality issues during the tendering and selection procedures

5.0 Our Aims in Promoting Equality and Social Cohesion

5.1 The Council aims to create safe, clean, healthy and well maintained communities where people feel included and their needs are recognised. This will be achieved by:

- Making all decisions as far as possible in the open, based upon fairness, having ensured that individual views are taken into account
- Ensuring where appropriate that individuals have the right to make representations regarding their views
- Acting in accordance with the Data Protection Act in the disclosure of data on individuals and decisions made
- Ensuring that decisions are made and implemented within a reasonable time
- Considering the equality and diversity impact of all Council policies and services
- Ensuring as far as possible that all partner organisations are compliant with the Human Rights Act and other relevant legislation
- Encouraging employees to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest ethical standards
- Adopting this Policy in working practices with the aim of preventing unlawful discrimination in recruitment, promotion, training, termination and retirement based on age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation
- Ensuring as far as possible that all people within the District are able to live free of physical, psychological or verbal abuse, the threat of abuse and sexual or other harassment.

6.0 Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Chief Executive is responsible overall for the monitoring and review of this Policy. The Head of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that the Council's employment practices are consistent with this Policy.
- 6.2 All Members and employees of the Council have a personal obligation to avoid discrimination, promote access and opportunities for all and to adhere to this Policy.
- 6.3 All personnel policies and procedures, particularly those relating directly to access and opportunity, will be reviewed regularly by the Human Resources Division to ensure that they are in accordance with this Policy.
- 6.4 Individual service managers are responsible for ensuring that services are provided in accordance with this Policy and that all employees for whom they are responsible are familiar with, and act in accordance with, this Policy.
- 6.5 Conduct which is not consistent with this Policy or relevant legislation will be considered a disciplinary matter, which may in some cases lead to dismissal.

Wyre Forest District Council
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