

STALMINE-WITH-STAYNALL PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY POLICY

COMMITMENT

Stalmine-with-Staynall Parish Council is committed to providing equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination in employment and in the way it carries out its activities. This policy is intended to assist the Council to put this commitment into practice and to provide a culture where dignity and respect for all are embedded

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Equality Act 2010 sets out protected characteristics that qualify for protection from discrimination, these are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment on grounds of these protected characteristics.

It is unlawful to treat someone less favourably on grounds of disability or age unless the less favourable treatment can be justified. It is also unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to employment caused by disability.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. in refusing to give a reference or in the form of reference given.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in the provision of goods, facilities or services to customers on grounds of the protected characteristics.

It is unlawful to discriminate, without justification, on grounds of disability or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services.

Some types of harassment or bullying will be unlawful discrimination.

It is unlawful to victimise someone because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

TYPES OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (perceptive discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (associative discrimination).

An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she was pregnant.

Unlike the other forms of discrimination, direct discrimination on the grounds of age can be justified.

Perceptive and associative discrimination are both forms of direct discrimination.

Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Associative discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied which is such that it would be to the detriment of a considerably larger proportion of the relevant group to which the individual belongs than to others, which is not objectively justifiable and which is to the individual's detriment.

An example of indirect sex discrimination could be requiring everyone to work full time unless there is a good reason, unrelated to sex, as to why the particular job has to be done on a full-time basis, since requiring everyone to work full time will normally adversely affect a higher proportion of women than men.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Harassment by a Third Party - employers are liable for harassment if they fail to protect employees from persistent harassment by third parties, for example contractors, members of the public, service users.

Victimisation is where someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

The Council is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Questions asked as part of the selection process relating to the health of candidates will be limited to those that have been identified as being intrinsic to the role. This will be done through risk assessment supported by, if required, specialist advice.

The Council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices. This may include the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done. The Council will refuse such requests for variations only if the Council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any prohibited ground of discrimination, for doing so. The Council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The Council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

The Council will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs, and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems, which may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The Council cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but the Council may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group which the Council identifies as such in particular types of job.

THOSE NOT EMPLOYED BY THE COUNCIL

The Council will not unlawfully discriminate against customers using or seeking to use facilities or services provided by the Council.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their line manager (clerk) who will take appropriate action.

TRAINING AND PREVENTION

The council will provide training in/raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The council will provide training to/raise awareness of all staff engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. The council will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

The council will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police, and sharing information with other branches of the business.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Every employee is required to assist the Council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

GRIEVANCES

If an employee considers that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, they may use the Council's grievance procedure to make a complaint.

The Council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance which it upholds. No employee will be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Use of the Council's grievance procedure does not affect an employee's right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months of the act of discrimination complained of taking place.

DATA PROTECTION

In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the council will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed; the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring . If changes are required, the council will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation, following the Council's data protection policy.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

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