

SELSTON PARISH COUNCIL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Introduction

This Equal Opportunities Policy expresses our commitment to ensuring that we meet our equality obligations to our employees, those who work for the Council and to the users of our services.

Statement of Policy

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, that they have equal opportunities to access appropriate services and have the right to achieve equal outcomes. As a service provider, we want our resources and services to be available and accessible to everyone, irrespective of individual background or needs. As an employer we have retained the consultancy support of Peninsula Business Services Ltd to develop and promote employment policies and procedures with a view to creating within the business a climate of good employment practices, employment relations and equal opportunities for all staff.

Selston Parish Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities, valuing diversity and tackling social exclusions. The Council will aim to provide opportunities that meet the diverse needs of different people and groups of people by ensuring that services and employment opportunities are accessible to all. Everyone will be treated fairly and with respect. Diverse needs will be understood and valued. The Council will aim to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

The Council also appreciates that, as a public authority for the purpose of the Human Rights Act 1998, it has statutory responsibilities and will conduct itself as far as possible and at all times in accordance with the spirit of the Act, respecting the appropriate fundamental human rights of all employees, customers and members of the public.

The Equality Act 2010

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on recruitment, employment and service delivery. The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and in some cases extends existing equality and anti-discriminatory legislation.

The Act protects people from being treated less favourably because they have a 'protected characteristic'. The relevant 'protected characteristics' are:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage and civil partnership*

Pregnancy and Maternity

Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)

Religion or belief (including lack of belief)

Sex

Sexual orientation

*Marriage or civil partnership is not a protected characteristic of people who use services.

Under the Act there are a number of forms of prohibited conduct which the law protects against:

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have.

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

Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination can occur when there is a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular protected characteristic.

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated unfavourably because they have taken, or might be taking, or is suspected of taking action under the Equality Act or supported someone who is doing so.

Harassment is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic or in a way that is a sexual in nature.

The Equality Act 2010 contains a public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty has three aims, requiring public bodies, including the Council, to have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The public sector Equality Duty means that we should consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work, in developing policy, in designing and delivering services and in relation to our own employees.

Equal Opportunities in Service Provision

The Council believes that all our customers have a right to expect and receive a quality of services that are appropriate and meet their needs. In order to ensure that services are independently accessible the Council will work to tackle and eliminate whatever barriers may exist.

As a service provider, we will:

- Engage with and involve communities in the development of services and make revisions to service delivery where necessary or appropriate.

- Ensure our buildings to which the public want or need access are as accessible as possible by making reasonable adjustments.

- Ensure employees receive training on equality and diversity in order to help them deliver services in a fair and equitable manner to all groups and individuals in the community.

- With our partners, develop and support community based projects and events that will help promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity within our community.

The effective delivery of this Equal Opportunities Policy is the responsibility of everyone connected with the Council.