

SPENNYMOOR TOWN COUNCIL



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the Council's Website www.spennymoor-tc.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Offices, Town Hall, Spennymoor. Costs are as per the model publication scheme.

1. General Statement of Policy

- 1.1 The Council recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The Act was introduced in October 2010 to replace and simplify over 100 pieces of previous anti-discrimination Acts and regulations. On 5 April 2011, the public sector Equality Duty came into force in England, Scotland and Wales. The Duty replaced all pre-existing race, disability and gender equality duties.
- 1.2 The protected characteristics are:

Employees

- Disability
- Sex (gender)
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

Service Users

- Disability
- Sex (Gender)
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Age

- 1.3 It is in the Council's best interests and those of the community to ensure that all of its resources are equally accessible throughout the community (both as employer and service provider).
- 1.4 To this end, within the framework of the law, the Council is committed whenever practicable to achieving and maintaining these aims.
- 1.5 Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals, both within the employment of the Council and those affected by its actions, are treated equally and that decisions are made within the spirit of equality for all.

2 Information

- 2.1 All employees of the Council and job applicants will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.

3. Recruitment and Promotion

- 3.1 Recruitment and promotion will be based on fair and justifiable job related criteria. Advertisements and job profiles will reflect clearly the specific needs of

the position. Any bias, which could lead to unjustifiable discrimination either direct or indirect, will be eliminated.

- 3.2 All stages of the recruitment process will be conducted on an objective basis.

4. Training

- 4.1 All employees will be afforded suitable training relevant to the current and future needs of the individual and the Council. All employees will be given the opportunity to discuss their training needs with their Managers and appropriate training programmes will be organised in accordance with the Council's Training and Development Policy.
- 4.2 Training will be given to all concerned on equal opportunities issues, these will include the Policy Makers, Members, Line Managers and staff involved in the recruitment procedure and Trade Union Representatives. All employees and Members will be given a copy of the policy and kept up to date with any future changes.

5. Terms and Conditions of Service

- 5.1 The implementation of National and Local Conditions of Service will be applied fairly to all employees.

6. Policy Implementation

- 6.1 This will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Team and all relevant Officers.

7. Monitoring

- 7.1 Monitoring systems will be developed and maintained by the Town Clerk and periodic reports will be presented to the appropriate Committee.

8. Complaints Procedure

- 8.1 Internal and external job applicants who think that they have been unfairly treated during the recruitment and selection process should direct their complaints to the Town Clerk who will initiate and monitor appropriate action.
- 8.2 The provisions of this policy will be covered by the Council's established disciplinary and grievance procedures. Employees who feel that they have

suffered any kind of harassment or that they have been discriminated against in relation to recruitment, promotion, or training opportunities on the grounds of sex (gender), race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, age, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment or disability should pursue their complaint through the Council's grievance procedure. During this process employees still retain the right to apply to an Industrial Tribunal should their complaint continue.

- 8.3 Any employee who commits an act of discrimination or personal harassment will be liable to disciplinary action.

SPENNYMOOR TOWN COUNCIL

Code of Practice - Equal Opportunities

Introduction

1. Code of Practice – Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code is to give practical guidance to promote equality of opportunity within the Council for all employees and potential employees in accordance with the principles set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy. The Code also gives advice on the initial measures which need to be taken to achieve equality of opportunity and shows the close link between Equal Opportunities and good employment practice.
- 1.2 This Code does not seek to cover all circumstances at this stage. It will be expanded and developed as necessary as the Council identifies areas of concern and will be amended to form a comprehensive guide.

2. Discrimination Based on Stereotyped Decision Making

- 2.1 Persons responsible for making decisions affecting access to jobs, training or promotion may unintentionally use stereotypes in their decision making. It is the tendency to see others as stereotypes, which can lead most easily to discriminatory practices. It has an undesirable tendency to either negatively affect the chances of success of certain applicants or serves to channel them into particular occupations or positions deemed appropriate to the particular stereotype. It is essential, therefore, that all employees making decisions affecting access to jobs, training or promotion, guard against discrimination based on common assumptions, that individuals because of their sex, race, marital status, colour, nationality, disability etc. possess characteristics that make them unsuitable for employment in certain types of jobs.

3. Recruitment, Promotion and Selection

- 3.1 The recruitment, promotion and selection process is of crucial importance to this policy and in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination it must be carried out according to consistent and objective job related criteria.

The main steps in the process to ensure this are detailed below:

3.2 Vacancy

- 3.2.1 Time Table - recruitment frequently takes place in pressurised circumstances. For the process to be carried out as efficiently as possible, it will be essential that a clear time table is drawn up. This will ensure that interviewers and interviewees know when they need to be available.
- 3.2.2 A member of the Senior Management Team should, as each vacancy arises or new post is created, review/complete a Job Description and Person Specification (available from Town Clerk's PA) for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.2.3 The criteria listed should be the considered specification of the minimum requirements of the job, experience and essential/ desirable criteria to meet those requirements and carry out the job satisfactorily. The criteria contained in the job profile should be strictly relevant to the job and not necessarily restrictive or inflated so as to exclude particular disadvantaged groups, for example, care should be taken when; a) requiring specific qualifications rather than the ability or potential ability to do the job; b) age barriers or minimum periods of relevant experience; c) restrictions relating to physical ability etc.
- 3.2.4 When publishing vacancies, all applicants should be informed of the Council's Equal Opportunities policy. Such information would normally be circulated by the Town Clerk but in other circumstances Management should ensure this information is made known. Information about posts should be prominently displayed to ensure full implementation of the policy.

3.3 Application Forms

The Manager advertising the post will ensure that the form does not ask questions which are detrimental to the Equal Opportunities Policy in that it requires information which is irrelevant to consideration on merit for the post in question. The Application Form will not be used as a test of literacy unless a standard of literacy is a genuine requirement of the job.

- 3.4 Shortlisting - Shortlisting will be undertaken by the Appointment Panel and must be based on the job and person specification alone.
- 3.5 Interviewing - All persons making appointments must endeavour to conduct interviews on an objective basis and shall deal only with each applicant's suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job requirements. Questions asked of candidates must relate only to the job. For example, candidates should not be asked questions about their personal circumstances, political affiliations or family commitments. Where necessary, to ensure their availability for unusual work variations, this should be done in an objective manner and not be personalised.

4 Guidance and Training

- 4.1 The Council will, within the resources available, introduce procedures within its training programme to assist the implementation of its policy in such areas as staff development, information to Members/ employees on recruitment practices.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1 The Council will continue to monitor the aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy and address imbalances of opportunity.

6. Employee Training

- 6.1 The Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of its employees. The principles of equality and fairness must be applied in considering training programmes for individuals and teams within the Council.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 7.1 Equality in the workplace means **equal job opportunities and fairness for employees and job applicants**. You must not treat people unfairly because of reasons protected by discrimination law ('protected characteristics'). For example, because of a person's sex, age or race.
- 7.2 Diversity means having distinct or unlike elements. In a workplace, diversity means **employing people who may be different from each other and who do not all come from the same background**. The differences may be those of national origin, physical appearance, religion, education, age, gender, or sexual orientation.

- 7.3 Inclusion is **the culture in which the mix of people can come to work**, feel comfortable and confident to be themselves, work in a way that suits them and delivers your business needs. Inclusion will ensure that everyone feels valued and importantly, adds value.
- 7.4 In addition to the above the Council will ensure that it upholds the tenets of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in interactions with any sector of society.
- 7.5 An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has benefits for employees, as well as responsibilities, as detailed below:

Fair treatment in all aspects of employment.

Right to raise a grievance if employees feel they have been discriminated against.

Employees are responsible within the policy for providing equal opportunities to both staff and members of the public.

The commitment of all employees is important in order that the policy can be effective. Staff who may have concerns should contact the Town Clerk.