



PORTISHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees of the Council and the people it serves, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken).

This policy will underpin all decisions taken by the Council and all actions taken by elected members, officers and all other associated individuals who are subject to Council policy and procedures.

POLICY

The Town Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

LEGAL POSITION Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- **Age**
- **Disability** which is physical or mental impairment which has (or is likely to have) a substantial effect on a person's ability to carry out day to day activities for a year or more. Certain medical conditions such as cancer, Multiple Sclerosis and HIV etc are a disability from the outset, whatever their impact on day to day activities. Protection from discrimination covers a person who had a disability in the past.
- **Gender reassignment** which is protection for transsexuals, including less favourable treatment because of an absence related to reassignment compared to absence because of sickness or injury etc
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity** protection from discrimination applies during pregnancy from conception to the end of the maternity leave. The protection is against discrimination because of pregnancy or maternity, or illness suffered as a result of pregnancy; and discrimination because a woman is on maternity leave or is exercising or seeking to exercise a right to take maternity leave. Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity cannot be justified.
- **Race** including segregation
- **Religion or belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation**

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”

EMPLOYMENT

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be encouraged to develop their full potential and fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council.

EQUAL PAY

A sex “equality clause” is to be read into a contract of employment under which an employee and a comparator of the opposite sex are employed where the two people are employed in equal work (like work, work related as equivalent in a job evaluation study or work of equal value). This means the terms relating to pay or other benefits are amended to ensure the male and female have the same rights and terms.

And a “maternity equality clause” takes effect during maternity leave so that a woman’s pay during maternity leave in certain circumstances is increased in line with those doing equal work who are not on maternity leave.

SERVICE DELIVERY

The Council provides services to the community both directly and working in partnership with other organisations. The Council will promote equality of opportunity for the people it serves by providing accessible information about the services available to them and delivering services that are appropriate to needs.

OUR COMMITMENT

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This will be further defined in the Council’s Dignity at Work - Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Breaches of the Council’s Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination, harassment or victimisation through the Council’s grievance procedure.

Other Personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this main Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that the Council strives to remain an Equal Opportunities employer. This policy will be implemented in line with legislation, both current and as updated.

Reviewed Jan 2016