



Haslemere Town Council

Equality Policy

(Adopted 2019, reviewed 2023)

Policy Statement

Haslemere Town Council recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable. It is the aim of the Council to ensure that no one with whom the Council interacts receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics).

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the staff will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

In the provision of the Council's services our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass contractors, residents or anyone looking to use the Council's services because they possess one of the protected characteristics.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

Our Commitment to our Staff

- i. To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- ii. Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- iii. Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- iv. To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- v. Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- vi. The policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Management Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Town Clerk and Staff Committee who will ensure that they and Town Hall staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The Town Clerk will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

Staff Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Third Parties

Third-party harassment occurs where a Council employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties. Haslemere Town Council will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform the town Clerk at once that this has occurred. Haslemere Town Council will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

Our commitment to our community

Mindful of the diversity of our population, we declare that the principle of equal opportunity shall apply not only to staff, but to all in our community, including councillors and residents alike. In everything that we do, we shall seek to treat all with equal consideration and respect.

Related Policies and Arrangements

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Council policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

Grievance and discipline

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the procedure set out in their contract of employment.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Council Disciplinary Procedure staff were provided with on appointment.