



Equality Policy

1. Desford Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our members and employees; and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
2. The aim is for our members and employees to be truly representative of all sections of society and our parishioners; and for each member and employee to feel respected and able to give their best.
3. The Council - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of the public.
4. The policy's purpose is to:
 - a. provide equality, fairness and respect for all involved with the Council.
 - b. not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
 - c. oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
5. The Council commits to:
 - a. encourage equality and diversity in all things the Council and councillors are involved with, as they are good practice and make business sense.
 - b. create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all members and employees are recognised and valued.
 - c. take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow members, employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the Council's work activities.
 - d. make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all members and employees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council.
 - e. decisions concerning employees being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
 - f. review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness; and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

- g. monitor the make-up of the employees regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the Equality Policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality Policy is working in practice, reviewing it annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.
6. This commitment includes training all members and employees about their rights and responsibilities under the Equality Policy. Responsibilities include members and employees conducting themselves to help the Council provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
7. All members and employees should understand that they can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their duties, against fellow members, employees, customers, suppliers and the public.
8. Such acts by an employee will be dealt with as misconduct under the Council's Grievance and/or Disciplinary Policies and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
9. Such acts by a member will lead to referral to the Monitoring Officer.
10. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence

The Equality Policy is fully supported by the Council.

Details of the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policies can be found on the website and in the Parish Office. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance.

Use of the Council's Grievance and/or Disciplinary Policies does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Adopted by Desford Parish Council on 20.07.22

Reviewed 06.06.2022