



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Alban Park Office
Windfall House, D1, The Courtyard
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Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT & POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or social class. The Council oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed contract, agency workers or temporary 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 helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

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.

This commitment of the Parish Council to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

Breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

1. Commitment

1.1 Colney Heath Parish Council is committed to implementing equality of opportunities in our employment practices and when carrying out all our various functions. We are committed to the development of effective policy, strategy and standards, and to the introduction of monitoring and information systems to review and evaluate progress towards the achievement of equality of information.

1.2 The Council is opposed to any form of less favourable treatment or financial reward through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation to employees, job applicants or service users on the grounds of any protected characteristic including race, religion or religious beliefs, disability, political opinions, creed, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status or civil partnership, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, trade union



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membership or activity and to any form of less favourable treatment on the grounds of handicap or age.

1.3 The Council therefore, wholeheartedly accepts our legal obligations under the relevant legislation, regulation and the Codes of Practice.

1.4 The Council also recognises that whilst much can be achieved through the development of policies, practices and procedures to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination, real progress towards equality of opportunity requires a programme of action that involves the commitment and participation of all staff and elected Members and requires a genuine commitment from everyone. The Council therefore recognises that the commitment, support and action of all Councillors and employees are crucial to the successful implementation of this commitment at all levels.

1.5 The Council is committed to the immediate investigation of any conduct which appears to be contrary to the aims of this Policy and, where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice cease forthwith. Any employee found guilty of such unacceptable conduct, regardless of grade or position, will be instructed to desist forthwith and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure which may result in dismissal.

2. Policy Objectives

2.1 The key objectives of this Policy are therefore:-

- to promote equal opportunities in the workplace;
- to maximise the effective use of the Council's workforce;
- to ensure that no employee, job applicant or service user receives less favourable or inappropriate treatment either directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex, marital/parental status or civil partnership, colour, gender re-assignment, age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and disability issues;
- to deal effectively with any instances of discrimination;
- to ensure that all employees understand their rights and responsibilities under this Policy;
- to make employees aware of the consequences of not adhering to the standards required by this Policy; and
- to identify action to monitor the Policy and encourage equality of opportunity.

3. Policy Detail

3.1 Colney Heath Parish Council is committed to the policy of equal treatment of and equal opportunity for all employees, job applicants and service users and



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requires everyone, of whatever grade or authority, to abide by this general principle and the requirements of the all relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

3.2 The Council believes that all people should be treated equally unless unequal, or different treatment, can be shown to be justified and is appropriate. We will not tolerate discrimination on any grounds.

3.3 The aim of our Policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee (full or part time) receives less favourable treatment on the above grounds or is disadvantaged by conditions, requirements or treatment which cannot be shown to be justified or are irrelevant to the job. These principles of equality of opportunity and treatment extend to all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, performance review, disciplinary action, grievances, pay, training, benefits, facilities, procedures, redundancy and all terms and conditions of employment.

3.4 The Council will ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, promoted, trained and treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities and by the use of objective criteria.

3.5 This Policy and the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment should apply equally to suppliers, members of the public and others directly associated with the conduct of the Council business. We will therefore actively promote equal opportunities in our activities to ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential skills and abilities.

3.6 Sexual, racial and any other forms of harassment or bullying will not be tolerated. Any form of harassment or bullying is a potential disciplinary matter and any such behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

3.7 The Council recognises the right of an employee to belong to, or not to belong to, a Trade Union, and membership or non-membership of such a Union, will not be taken into account in any way during their employment.

3.8 The Council is committed to the employment of people with disabilities and will treat such employees in aspects of their recruitment and employment in exactly the same manner as other employees, the difficulties of their disablement permitting and the viability of reasonable adjustments. Assistance will be given, wherever possible, to ensure that, disabled employees are assisted in access to their workplace, in gaining access to the facilities on Council premises, and in progressing in their career with appropriate training, subject only to the opportunity existing, the applicant's suitability, talent, and wishes. The Council is



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keen to hear ideas whereby its facilities can be made more user-friendly for the benefit of people with disabilities.

3.9 The Council recognises that men and women are entitled to be paid equally without any bias on the grounds of sex. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that male and female staff receive equal pay for the same work and for work rated as equivalent and for work of equal value.

3.10 The Council is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience and attitude are appropriate to the requirements of the various positions, regardless of age. We will discourage inclusion of any criteria in job advertisements and job/person specifications which could be discriminatory and every attempt will be made to recruit and promote on the basis of relevant competence and skill.

3.11 This Policy applies to verbal and physical actions as well as any other form of communication including electronic communication such as text messages, emails and faxes as well as written communications and social media.

3.12 This Policy will be brought to the attention of all employees, job applicants, and service users and monitored periodically and such steps as necessary taken to ensure that it remains effective.

4. Responsibilities under the Policy

4.1 The Clerk has overall responsibility, in consultation with the Council, for the implementation, review, monitoring of this Policy and ensuring corrective action is taken.

4.2 It is the duty of all employees to accept personal responsibility for the practical application of equal opportunity in their job, to operate within the terms of this Policy so as to ensure that any barriers to equal opportunity are removed and to ensure that their attitude and treatment of each individual is appropriate.

5. Monitoring

5.1 The Council will regularly monitor our policies to ensure that we pursue an effective policy of equal opportunity and any sensitive personal data required as part of the monitoring will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Principles.

6. Dealing with Complaints

6.1 Despite all reasonable measures being taken by the Parish Council to implement this Equal Opportunities Policy and eliminate all forms of discrimination



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from the workplace, individual behaviour cannot be controlled all the time and instances of discrimination or harassment may still occur.

6.2 The starting point from the Council's perspective is that, if an employee is upset about something which is happening in the workplace it needs to be known, discussed and resolved as quickly as possible.

6.3 The Council's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure provides employees with an effective means of obtaining redress if they believe they have been discriminated against. Every attempt will be made to find a solution which may include mediation and/or an apology.

7. Training

7.1 All employees will be trained, developed and promoted solely on the basis of merit and ability.

7.2 As part of our commitment to the implementation of this Policy the Council will take measures to ensure that this Policy is observed and will ensure that all relevant employees particularly those involved in the selection process are aware of the obligations and duties imposed by relevant employment legislation and receive appropriate training in equality.

8. Positive Action

8.1 Selection for employment or promotion will be based solely on merit, having regard to the requirements of the job. However, should obvious inequalities become apparent, and some form of positive action be considered desirable, then such action will be taken within the parameters set for this purpose by the law.

9. Malicious Allegations

9.1 Where an accusation of discrimination is found to be false, and was made for malicious reasons, then that in itself will be considered a breach of this Policy and will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal.

10. Safeguards

10.1 Any action under this Policy will be confidential to all parties and the employer will not disclose information except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigating the complaint or taking relevant disciplinary measures or is subject of legal proceedings.



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10.2 No employee will be reprimanded or suffer harassment from anyone as a result of seeking resolution of a complaint through this Policy, unless the complaint was made maliciously.

10.3 Records will be kept detailing the nature of the complaint, the response, any action taken and the reasons for it and will be kept confidential and retained in accordance with Data Protection principles.

11. Review

11.1 This Equal Opportunities Policy is non-contractual and does not form part of the employee's contract of employment.

11.2 The Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council to ensure that it is effective or as appropriate to reflect any statutory change.

12. Approval

12.1 The Equal Opportunities Policy was presented to Full Council and accepted in draft only at the meeting held on 1 March 2018.

Signed: _____

Lisa Chaplin

Clerk

For and on behalf of

Colney Heath Parish Council

Date: _____