



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Council Equality & Diversity Policy (Adopted as part of Staff Handbook – Reviewed November 2020)

14. Equality and Diversity

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council is an Equal Opportunities employer.

14.1 The Policy

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council is committed to being an effective Equal Opportunities organisation. This means that the Council will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect at all times.

This applies to all areas of the Council's activities; including recruitment, employment, and provision of Council services.

14.2 As an Employer

We will provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and will not discriminate on grounds of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Sex or gender;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race (including ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, and national origin);
- Religion or belief; or
- Sexual orientation

All employees will be treated fairly and with respect regardless of position, part-time/full-time working, Trade Union membership or length of contract. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

All employees are required to treat one another with mutual respect. Actions, behaviour, and attitudes should consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual.

Harassment and discrimination in any form is unacceptable behaviour and offenders will be subject to disciplinary action.

14.3 As a Service Provider

- The Council will strive to ensure that all services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council are made accessible to all individuals and groups equally and without discrimination.
- All service users will be treated with respect. Actions, behaviour, and attitudes will consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual.
- The Council will, wherever appropriate, work in partnership with other agencies in the area; including the relevant unitary, county, district, and borough councils, voluntary groups, and community organisations to promote equal opportunities.
- The Council will ensure that wherever possible all contractors directly supplying goods and services or executing works for, or on behalf of, the Council comply with this Council's stated policy on equal opportunities.

14.4 The Policy in Action As an Employer

The Council aims to achieve the policy by:

- Ensuring that its employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities to each other, the customer, and the organisation regarding equal opportunities issues;
- Providing a way in which individuals can communicate any concerns via competent named personnel;
- Treating any unacceptable behaviour seriously; and
- Ensuring that all Managers realise they have a key role in implementing this policy and are expected to take personal responsibility for ensuring its success.

As a Service Provider

- The Council aims to achieve its policy by:
- Ensuring that employees are made aware of the Council's standards of service and customer care, including equal treatment in service delivery;
- Ensuring that no member of the public is disadvantaged or treated less favourably than others in terms of access to Council services. Where the Council's practices, policies, or procedures are found to make access impossible or unreasonably difficult, we will take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to change these practices, policies or procedures;
- Ensuring that, wherever practical, all public buildings and premises owned or managed by the Council are accessible to all. Where this is impractical in the short-term, we will provide reasonable alternative methods of access so that no member of the public is disadvantaged by physical barriers;
- Recognising the importance of communication in attaining equality and providing quality services, which are responsive to the needs of all local people, for example through the provision of information in large print and on audio tape on request; and
- Complying with all relevant legislation relating to discrimination and equality.

14.5 Role of Councillors and Employees

All Councillors and employees are responsible for implementing the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. It is important that all individuals who are employed by the Council appreciate that they have a responsibility and a role to play in the provision of equal opportunities.

Failure of an employee to act appropriately may result in disciplinary procedures which may result in dismissal.

14.6 Monitoring of Equal Opportunities

The Council's Staffing Committee will have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy as it applies to the Council as an employer.

The Council's Finance & Governance Committee will have responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy as it applies to the Council as a service provider, involving local community and voluntary groups in the monitoring process where appropriate.

Complaints from staff about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with as laid down in the Council's Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate.

Complaints from members of the public about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with through the Council's Complaints Procedure.