

SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

*Delivering Excellence across the
Shaftesbury Community*



Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy

Date of Adoption: 26 February 2019
Review Date: February 2020



Managing People Policies



Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to define and promote Shaftesbury Town Council's approach to equality, diversity and human rights, and to ensure there are defined guidelines for employees to follow.
- 1.2 The Equality, Diversity and Human Rights policy is for the benefit of all staff, members, service users and our commissioned services. This policy covers the areas of:
 - Employment
 - Service Delivery
 - Community Leadership
- 1.3 The Town Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all taking into account the differences of race, gender, gender identity, religion, belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership.
- 1.4 The organisation will also strive to uphold the human rights of all its staff and service users in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998
- 1.5 By adopting and implementing an Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy we accept our responsibility for addressing and tackling the imbalances caused by disadvantage and discrimination, so that we can make sure all communities have opportunities to access our services, be involved in what we do and be part of our workforce.
- 1.6 We have made significant progress but recognise that there is a great deal of work we still need to do and we hope that this policy will act as a means for carrying out this important work.
- 1.7 We expect all our staff to comply with this policy, and where failings occur this can result in the application of the council's disciplinary procedure.
- 1.8 We also expect our contractual partners to comply with the council's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy. If any partners are found to be in breach of any of the principles within the policy this could lead to termination of partnership.
- 1.9 Conversely, when reviewing the policy, we will embrace appropriate good practice identified through partnership working.
- 1.10 Consideration of equality, diversity and human rights in these areas will therefore form an important part of the council's work.

2 Our Statutory Duty Under the Equality Act 2010

- 2.1 As a public body leading and speaking on behalf of the community the Town Council must play its part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 places a new Equality Duty on the Council to work to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act



- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who don't share it
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who don't share it
- 2.3 No individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination because of the following characteristics (known as protected characteristics under the Act):
- Age,
 - Disability,
 - Gender reassignment,
 - Marriage and civil partnership,
 - Pregnancy and maternity,
 - Race,
 - Religion and belief,
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation.
- 2.4 We will engage with people to ensure the service is relevant and meets their needs. We will empower people to recognise and counter discrimination and be supportive in doing so.
- 2.5 No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- 2.6 We will also monitor the work of the Council to ensure that human rights are respected and valued and that the Human Rights Act is complied with in service provision.
- 2.7 The Human Rights Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to.

They include:

- Right to life
- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Right to liberty and security
- Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment without law
- Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Freedom of expression



- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry and start a family
- Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Right to education
- Right to participate in free elections

3 Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights as A Community Leader

3.1 As a community leader, working with our partners, to ensure a combined effort to tackling inequality:

- We recognise the value of an energetic and creative voluntary sector and will work with groups, individuals and organisations to provide culturally specific services, with equalities firmly embedded in those relationships and projects
- We will encourage real participation in local democracy and representation on various bodies and in our processes, from people who may normally feel excluded from decision-making processes
- We will comply with all our legal obligations and follow best practice guidance
- We will embed equality and diversity into the business planning process of the Council, ensuring that equality responsibilities form part of all service plans, core elements of officer job descriptions and Member role description and that equality is an essential aspect of our Code of Corporate Governance. We will lead by example so other organisations can aspire to the standards we set.
- Training on Equality & Diversity is provided for all staff and to new staff at induction as well as for Members.
- We will monitor Town Council procurement activity to ensure that statutory equality and diversity duties relating to procurement are observed.

3.2 This extends to working in partnerships with other agencies.

3.3 We will set high standards for others to follow in the way we procure goods and services

4 Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights as A Service Provider

4.1 As a service provider, ensuring that our services are tailored to the needs of the individual, and that staff are aware of and responsive to the needs of different sectors of our community:

- We will work to ensure that Council information, services and events are accessible. We will work to reduce the barriers people may face due to disability or language by



making reasonable adjustments and arranging appropriate translation, interpretation or transcription materials or equipment when necessary

- We will carry out equality monitoring activities when we consult with the community in order to ensure that the views are representative of our communities and to understand the different views different groups of people may have. We will aim to conduct specific consultation exercises with groups shown to be under represented in our consultation campaigns.
- We will carry out equality monitoring activities among service users/non-users in order to ensure services are relevant to meet their needs. We will take action to overcome under representation where needed.

5 Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights as an Employer

5.1 As an employer we aim to ensure that we promote a workplace culture whereby all employees and members feel valued and respected, and where nobody carries out their role in fear of prejudice, discrimination, bullying or harassment.

5.2 We recognise that harassment can take many forms, not all of which may be obviously overt.

5.2 Any reported cases of harassment within the Council will be dealt with promptly and sensitively, using the Shaftesbury Town Council's Bullying and Harassment Procedure.

5.3 Overall, the Council aims for all employees and Members to feel comfortable at work and to be treated with dignity and respect. No form of intimidation, victimisation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

5.4 In order to ensure that we are effectively working towards the implementation of the aims of this policy:

- We will embed equality and diversity into the business planning process of the Council, ensuring that equality responsibilities are core elements of officer job descriptions and Member role description and that equality is an essential aspect of our overall Corporate Governance.
- We will carry out equality monitoring activities among job applicants and employees in order to be aware of representation of all protected characteristics within the Council. We will take action to overcome under representation where needed.
- We will ensure that our employee appraisal systems take account of the need to abide by this policy and to actively promote equality and human rights within all roles. We will have regard for dependant and caring responsibilities within our employment practices, using Town Council policies and procedures on work life balance.
- We will ensure that all Shaftesbury Town Council's recruitment and selection processes – including those of staff, and Members – will be conducted fairly and in accordance with this policy and other internal recruitment policies.



6 Making Sure Our Colleagues Know About the Policy

- 6.1 This policy will be available on the internet and any updates will be circulated to all staff. We will also provide training and advice to our colleagues on their specific responsibilities under this policy.
- 6.2 Town Council staff are required to comply with and support the council's policies in relation to equality, diversity and human rights. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.
- 6.3 The Town Council will ensure that all its staff receive ongoing training to ensure they:
 - Are made fully aware of the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and how it affects their work;
 - Understand any action plans relevant to them and their responsibilities for implementing these plans;
 - Are provided with a copy of a summary statement version of this policy; and
 - Receive information in the form of targeted training and briefings to embed consideration of equality issues and share good practice in all services.
- 6.4 We will also ensure any contractor, sub-contractor or organisation employed by the Town Council to carry out work on our behalf complies with the Council's required standards in respect of Equality and Diversity.
- 6.5 It is so that anyone seeking work knows about our policy and that anyone seeking contracts or work from us will be clear about the expectations that the Town Council will have of them and their own colleagues.

7 Responsibility

- 7.1 The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Town Council which is chaired by the Mayor and with the Town Clerk, who is the Head of Paid Service. Together they ensure that there are systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis.
- 7.2 All Town Council Members and staff have a responsibility to:
 - Listen to what others have to say in respect of their views;
 - Report any incidences of discrimination, bullying, harassment, verbal or physical abuse or aggression;
 - Challenge own prejudices and those of others;
 - Know their individual rights and responsibilities in relation to the law;
 - Participate in relevant training;
 - Proactively promote and celebrate diversity.
- 7.3 The Town Clerk will co-ordinate equality and diversity related activities, facilitate developments and communicate responsibilities to all staff and clients.
- 7.4 Under the leadership of the Town Clerk each Service Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the Service they are responsible for carries out the work necessary to



adopt and implement this policy as recorded in service plans. Service managers will be responsible for ensuring equality, diversity and human rights are fully considered in all service and related policy developments and monitored following implementation.

- 7.5 We recognise that every colleague, and every contractor, partner or organisation that receives funding from the Town, has an obligation to put this or similar approved policies into practice.

8 What to Do If Something Goes Wrong

8.1 Members of the public

If you think we are not providing a service in line with this policy or you think you have been treated unfairly in any way, you can complain to the Town Council.

Our Complaints Procedure explains how you can do this.

You can obtain a copy of this procedure from the Town Hall.

Our contact details are:

Town Hall, High St, Shaftesbury SP7 8LY

Tel: 01747 852420

Email: enquiries@shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

or download it from the Town Council website:

www.shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

You can make a complaint by telephoning or by writing to Shaftesbury Town Council,
CONTACT DETAILS ABOVE

9 Town Council Employees

- 9.1 If you are concerned about any equality issues relating to your employment you can speak to your line manager, or to the Town Clerk.
- 9.2 If you feel embarrassed, humiliated, offended, distressed, alarmed, apprehensive or fearful because of someone else's behaviour towards you, you have the right to make a complaint and ask for the appropriateness of the behaviour to be reviewed.
- 9.3 The Town Council's Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure explains how to do this. You can find out more information by speaking to your line manager or Town Clerk.
- 9.4 You also have the right to take up issues through the Grievance Procedure. You can obtain information about this procedure from your line manager, or Town Clerk
- 9.5 If you are in a Trade Union, you can contact them for advice and support. Please refer to your local Trade Union representative for more details.
- 9.6 Where you feel a manager, elected member or other officer has handled an aspect of service delivery or management related to equality, diversity or human rights particularly well you can feed this information back through the appraisal system.

10 Let Us Know What You Think



10.1 If you wish to discuss this policy or make any comments or suggestions on the work, we are aiming to do to carry out this policy please contact the Town Clerk at Shaftesbury Town Council.

Our contact details are:

Town Hall, High St, Shaftesbury SP7 8LY

Tel: 01747 852420

Email: enquiries@shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

11 **Alternative Formats**

If you need this information in an alternative language or format: - large print or electronically, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address above.