

Driffield Town Council - Equality Policy

1: Introduction

1.1. The aim of Driffield Town Council's Equality Policy is to ensure that no member of staff, councillor or person using the council services receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, maternity and pregnancy, race, religious or philosophical beliefs or sex or sexual orientation. This is in accordance with both the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.2. Driffield Town Council agrees to monitor council proceedings to ensure that no group with the protected characteristics stated in clause 1.1 is placed at a disadvantage by conditions, requirements, decisions or access barriers that have a disproportionately adverse effect on them. Further to this the council agrees to review procedures annually in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.3. Driffield Town Council believes that services, employment and political engagement policies should show awareness of differences within the community. The council recognises that members of groups with protected characteristics may possess experience and awareness that could be used to the advantage of the whole community.

1.4. Driffield Town Council agrees that members of groups with protected characteristics should be encouraged to fully participate in community life, including political engagement, and that Driffield Town Council will take into account any special needs of groups and individuals.

1.5. Driffield Town Council is committed to equal opportunities in employment and will implement recruitment, advertising, selection and interview processes that comply with the Equality Act 2010.

1.6. In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, Driffield Town Council recognises that, in order to further promote equal opportunities, it is essential to foster positive relationships between groups and individuals with a protected characteristic and those without.

2: Employment

2.1. Job descriptions, adverts, application, selection and interviewing processes will be monitored to ensure that applicants have equal opportunities to gain employment with Driffield Town Council providing they have the essential skills and qualifications for the job they are applying for. The process will also be monitored to ensure that no group is put at an unfair disadvantage.

2.2 If an applicant discloses a disability then the council will ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place for the application and appointment process and that adjustments needed to meet the job description are discussed with the applicant. The applicant will be the expert on their own abilities and the council will fully meet the duty to make reasonable adjustments as set out in the Employers Code of Conduct statutory guidance for the Equality Act 2010.

2.3 Driffield Town Council believes that all employees have the right to be able to do their job free from harassment (especially on the grounds of any protected characteristics) and to feel safe and secure whilst working and to be treated with dignity by other employees, councillors and members of the public. Harassment under the Equality Act 2010 is defined as 'behaviour that constitutes unwanted conduct or that creates an undignified, humiliating, threatening, intimidating or hostile environment for any individual and where the offending behaviour is linked to a protected characteristic, even if the complainant does not have that characteristic themselves.'

2.4 Employees are further protected from victimisation, which is defined as being 'unfair treatment for reason of undertaking a protected act under the Equality Act 2010'. This means that if someone has taken steps to assert their rights under the Equality Act through complaint, legal action or has

backed someone else making a claim, then any unfair treatment arising from their actions will be defined as the unlawful act of victimisation.

2.5 Driffield Town Council believes that all employees have a right to training suitable for their role and that everyone will be entitled to access that training whether they have a protected characteristic or not. The council will ensure that any external training procured is also in accordance with the Equality Act and that outside training companies make suitable adjustments for disabled people.

2.6 Any person contracting their services to Driffield Town Council has the right to fair treatment under the Equality Act 2010.

3: Councillors

3.1. Driffield Town Council believes that it is advantageous for people with protected characteristics to have a role in council business and have the ability to fully participate in political engagement in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The council has always welcomed councillors from a diverse cross-section of the public and will continue to do so, ensuring that would be councillors with any barriers to participation due to having a protected characteristic will have necessary adjustments made, reviewed and adapted so they can participate fully.

3.2. Councillors agree that their conduct, communication with the public, other councillors and council staff through all means including social media are in accordance with the Equality Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty and respect the right of staff, councillors and the public to go about their business free from harassment as defined in clause 2.3.

3.3 Councillors agree to monitor the decisions made as a council to ensure that no group is put at an unfair disadvantage due to that decision. All council decisions will be subject to a discussion about the potential effects on groups with protected characteristics.

4: Service Users

4.1 Driffield Town Council believes that all users of the services provided by the council and who use property and buildings belonging to or maintained by the council, have the right to equal use and access of facilities. The council will ensure that access to buildings and public amenities is equal for all people with and without protected characteristics including disabilities.

4.2 Financial and other decisions will be monitored to ensure that members of any groups with protected characteristics are not unfairly treated or placed at an unfair disadvantage compared with groups who do not share that protected characteristic. There is also a need to monitor decisions to check whether they are compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality of opportunity for all groups.

4.3 Communication between the council and service users will be monitored for accessibility for all users and reasonable alternative formats will be used for disabled people needing an alternative format.

5: Monitoring

5.1 All policies and procedures will be reviewed for compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and associated guidance. This will be undertaken once a year formally and each new decision made by the council will consider the impact of that decision on all protected characteristics and steps taken to remove or minimise any potential disadvantage to any group.

5.2 Responsibility for upholding the Equality Act is taken by the elected members of the council.

The practical execution of the duties will fall to the following committees:

The Personnel committee will have responsibility for employees.

The Buildings and assets committee will have responsibility for access to buildings, including public conveniences.

The Events committee will have responsibility for access and arrangements at events.

The Environmental committee will have responsibility for ensuring pavement gritting, public art etc enhance rather than obstruct access for disabled and older people and that public areas are accessible for all members of the public.

Other committees need to be added to this.

There may need to be other clauses to add.

6: Appendix

6.1. The three main tenets of the Public Sector Equality Duty are

- 1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- 2) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are to be achieved by

- 1) Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- 2) Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- 3) Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. (Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission website)

Reviewed: 2nd March 2021