



Stroud Town Council Equality Policy

Introduction

Stroud Town Council is committed to encouraging equality and diversity and eliminating unlawful discrimination within the Council (including staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors) and in the delivery of its service to the public.

We aim to treat people with respect and we will encourage all staff, councillor, volunteers and contractors to give their best and treat each other and members of the public with respect.

Context

This policy is written in line with the Equality Act 2010 which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of the following **protected characteristics**;

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sex (gender)
- Pregnancy and maternity (a protected characteristic separate to sex)
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for delivering our services and in our governance and employment conditions, recruitment practices and in training or other developmental opportunities:

- Providing equality, fairness and respect for all
- Not unlawfully discriminating in relation to the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics
- Opposing and avoiding all forms of unlawful discrimination.

Policy

The Council will:

- Encourage equality and diversity - this is good and proper practice and helps us to make the most of skills and deliver our services well

- Create a service-delivery and working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued. This commitment includes training staff and councillors about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
- Ensure that all staff understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff and councillors, 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 organisation
- Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and to update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- Deal with acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, in relevant circumstances and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice in the case of staff. The Council reserves the right to take steps to protect staff in cases of inappropriate behaviour to them, including by councillors and members of the public. In the case of councillor misconduct in this respect, complaints will be made to the District Council Monitoring Officer, under the Council's Code of Conduct.

Notes

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/Code of Conduct 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 Council has a separate Complaints Procedure.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Relevant legislation and guidance documents

Legislation
Equalities Act 2010
The Human Rights Act 1998

NALC Legal Topic Notes and Guidance

LTN/ref.	Title	Relevance
3	The powers of a parish meeting in a parish without a separate parish council	Explains the other statutory duties which parish meetings are subject to.
5	Parish, town and community meetings	Confirms the requirement to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled persons' access to and participation in council meetings.
18	The Human Rights Act 1998	Explains protection provided by the 1998 Act.
22	Disciplinary & Grievance Arrangements	Sets out arrangements for dealing with employment issues
E06-06	The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006	Explains statutory procedure for dismissal of an employee based on default retirement age (DRA).
E01-11	The abolition of the default retirement age	Confirms employers will not be able to issue any notifications for compulsory retirement using the DRA procedure from 6 April 2011
E03-11	The abolition of the default retirement age update	Gives guidance in respect of councils' notice to retire an employee using DRA procedure between 1 and 5 April 2011.

Date of next review May 2022