



Helston Town Council

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Reviewed: September 2023

Next Review: September 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Helston Town Council is committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant, employee, contractor, councillor or service user receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marital or civil partnership status
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race (to include colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
 - Religious, spiritual, philosophical beliefs, or lack of such belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Sex
- 1.3 Under the Equality Act 2010, these characteristics are protected.
- 1.4 This policy seeks to ensure that no person is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance or access to services or is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.
- 1.5 Helston Town Council recognises people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 All employees, members and contract providers are covered by this policy. It applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas will be monitored and policies and practices amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.
- 2.2 Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Town Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of all. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with designated line managers, all Councillors and employees have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every Councillor and employee to this policy and application of its principles is essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Town Council.

3. COMMITMENT AS AN EMPLOYER

3.1 The Town Council is committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of staff are recognised and valued;
- Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated;
- Providing training, development and progression opportunities to all staff;
- Understanding equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense; and
- Reviewing all employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

4. COMMITMENT AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

4.1 The Town Council is committed to:

- Fully supporting this policy by Town Councillors and ensuring agreement has been reached with employee representatives where appropriate;
- Having clear procedures that enable service users, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated; and
- Treating breaches of the equality and diversity policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENTS

5.1 Helston Town Council will:

- treat everyone with respect and dignity;
- ensure that no person is disadvantaged by their protected characteristics;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions behaviour about protected characteristics;
- actively promote equality and diversity;
- make reasonable adjustments to take account of the needs of all;
- offer equal access all to representation, services, employment, training and pay for all and encourage other organisations to do the same;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to any allegations of discriminatory assumptions and behaviour.

5.2 Age

5.2.1 The Town Council will:

- Ensure that people of all ages are given equal access to its employment, training, development and promotion opportunities, unless subject to legal requirements.

5.3 Disability

5.3.1 The characteristic will also apply to neurodiversity and mental health conditions.

5.3.2 In addition to 5.1 the Town Council will:

- Where possible provide reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have equal access to its services and employment opportunities; and
- Seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of disability aids such as loop systems, alternative formatting and other facilities where appropriate.

5.4 Race and Xenophobia

5.4.1 In addition to 5.1 the Town Council will:

- Ensure reporting of racist incidents to any other relevant authority.

5.5 Gender

5.5.1 In addition to 5.1 the Town Council will:

- Provide support to prevent discrimination against any individual regardless of gender identity.

5.6 Sexual orientation

5.6.1 There are no individual actions for this protected characteristic and all relevant actions are outlined at 5.1.

5.7 Religion or belief

5.7.1 In addition to 5.1 the Town Council will:

- Ensure that the religion or beliefs and related observances of all are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and
- Respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

5.8 Pregnancy or maternity

5.8.1 This characteristic will also cover adoption leave including fostering as detailed in the staff handbook.

5.9 Marriage or civil partnership

5.9.1 There are no individual actions for this protected characteristic and all relevant actions are outlined at 5.1.

6. EX-OFFENDERS

- 6.1 The Town Council will prevent discrimination against its employees regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).
- 6.2 The criteria for disqualification as a town councillor remains in accordance with relevant legislation.

7. EMPLOYMENT

- 7.1 Helston Town Council is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that the Council's workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination.
- 7.2 The Town Council will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.
- 7.3 Further information on the Council's policy in respect of employment can be found in the Equal Opportunities Policy contained in the staff handbook.

8. RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY

- 8.1 All members of staff and Councillors remain personally responsible for ensuring that they act within the law. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that staff perform their duties in a lawful manner and that proper training and support is provided accordingly. In certain circumstances the Town Council could be vicariously liable for actions carried out by staff purportedly in the Town Council's name. Any member of staff or Councillor may be personally liable if, whilst on Council business and despite guidance and training from the Council, they behave illegally in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

9. REVIEW

- 9.1 Review of this policy will be carried out annually by Helston Town Council.