

Equality Policy

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JSCC Approved –

P&R Approved –



Policy Statement

West Lindsey District Council values all of its employees and recognises the importance of equality of opportunity. It aims to achieve this by ensuring the operation of fair and consistent employment practices that take account of the diversity of groups and individuals. Equality is regarded as an issue for all employees, who must adhere to, and can expect, certain standards of behaviour.

The council will promote equal treatment in accordance with legislation, and will strive to provide an environment free of prejudice and unlawful discrimination. Senior management will be responsible for ensuring that this is understood and adhered to by all employees of the council.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the basis of the following nine characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Race
- Religion or (non)-Belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil partnership (protection against direct discrimination only)
- Pregnancy and maternity

Discriminatory treatment on the above grounds is seen as potentially harmful to both employees and the council. The council will endeavour to protect its employees from such treatment, whether by colleagues, members of the public or service users.

Any employee who feels that they have been discriminated against due to any of the protected characteristics mentioned in this policy or treated unequally and unfairly for another reason is encouraged to contact their manager or HR.

The council seeks to meet its legal requirements and to safeguard employees' rights.

Scope of Policy

All Councillors, employees and others who work on behalf of the council are expected to carry out their responsibilities under this policy and to follow relevant policies and procedures. All employees have a role to play in ensuring fairness towards colleagues and to all sectors of the community we serve

Any breach of this policy by employees may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Policy. Volunteers and contractors may be excluded from further involvement with provision of council services.

Responsibilities

All employees/volunteers/contractors etc:

- Have a legal duty to have due regard or consciously consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between all people including those having, or being perceived to have, one or more of the protected characteristics.
- Will cooperate with measures introduced to ensure equality and non-discrimination and will ensure that their own behaviour towards colleagues, service users and members of the public is appropriate in terms of this policy.
- Should be aware that discrimination can be based on a person having or being perceived as having one or more of the protected characteristics.
- It can also be based on discriminating against someone because they associate with a person having, or perceived as having, one or more of the protected characteristics.
- Will not induce or attempt to include colleagues to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Should report and suspected discriminatory practice, by following the guidelines set out in the Bullying and Harassment Guide.
- Will not victimise individuals who have taken action regarding discrimination and any such action, whether in the workplace or not, may result in disciplinary investigation by the council and/or by a professional body.
- Are encouraged to take action under the appropriate policies if they are subjected to any discriminatory behaviour.
- Are reminded that this policy applies in relation to conduct at work related social events.
- Should note that legal action could be taken against them personally if they discriminate unlawfully.

All managers will:

- Ensure that they and their staff are fully aware of this policy, its contents and their obligations.
- Establish and maintain a working environment which is free from discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.
- Address instances of suspected discrimination that they observe or are brought to their attention. In some cases it may be appropriate to investigate under the Disciplinary policy.

The council as an employer will:

- In carrying out its functions, have due regard or consciously consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between all people including those having, or being perceived to have, one or more of the protected characteristics.
- Provide training and guidance to managers and other employees as appropriate on the content of this policy and also raise awareness of equality and diversity issues.

Equal Opportunities Legislation

The list below details the key equality legislation.

The Equality Act 2010:

The Equality Act replaces all previous antidiscrimination legislation and brings together, harmonises and extends the current equality law. It aims to make it more consistent, clearer and easier to follow.

The main changes are:

- Defines nine protected characteristics.
- Removes potentially discriminatory recruitment procedures.
- Changes definitions of disability and gender reassignment.
- Protects against perceptive and associated discrimination.
- Introduces the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Policy Statement

West Lindsey District Council has a commitment to equal opportunities. It seeks to ensure that no potential or current employee receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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