

WARMSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The policy aims to eliminate direct and or indirect discrimination on ground of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, religion, age, disability and all forms of harassment.

TURNING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Warmsworth Parish Council intends to implement the policy:

- By issuing these codes of practice to all staff.
- By monitoring. This is a longer term measure involving the collection of data about existing staff, job applicants, job offers etc. in order to assess whether or not the policy is working.
- By making it clear that all staff will be expected to make the Policy work, and not act in a discriminatory way.

These measures reflect the importance Warmsworth Parish Council places on equality of opportunity. But what matters most is the attitude of every member of staff. It is everyone's business to help eliminate discrimination and to make equality of opportunity a reality.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Reviewing Vacancies

No arbitrary restrictions will be placed on vacancies. Where restrictions are applied they must be reasonably justified.

Advertising Interviewing and Selection

All job vacancies will be advertised

Checks will include:

- Ensuring that there are no requirements or criteria which are unnecessary to the post and which might exclude applicants from any particular section of the population specified in the Policy.
- Ensuring advertisements emphasise the availability of flexible working arrangements and job share opportunities where appropriate.
- Ensuring no artificial age barriers is introduced i.e. any age restrictions can be reasonably justified.
- There will be a job description and person specification for every post.
- Overseas qualifications, degrees and diplomas, which are comparable with UK qualifications, will be acceptable as equivalents.
- General assumptions must not be made that a person's race, sex or abilities, for example, would disqualify them from carrying out certain kinds of work.
- Interview questions must not be of a discriminatory nature.
- Selection decisions must not be influenced by colour, race, nationality, ethnic or

national origins, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age or disability or by the traditional profile of the post holder; unless for genuine occupational qualification reasons. The selection must not be influenced by the prejudices of other staff. An explicit record of the reasons for appointment or non-appointment should be made on the appropriate form.

- Recruitment records, which detail the appropriate information to enable equal opportunity analysis, must be kept.

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NEEDS

General Provisions

Where employees have particular religious or cultural needs which may conflict with work requirements, Warmsworth Parish Council will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met (e.g. where annual leave is sought on a religious festival it should not be unreasonably withheld).

In dealing with such matters Warmsworth Parish Council must seek to balance the operational needs of the post with the cultural and religious needs of employees. Where appropriate expert advice should be sought.

The organisation will develop and maintain an updated database of languages spoken by staff and identify other sources of support for interpreting and translation services for staff.

COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION OR RACIAL, SEXUAL OR OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT

The council's objective will be best served if staff work in harmony with each other and with those to whom they report. Each member of staff should respect other members of staff and realise that behaviour that they may find acceptable may not be so regarded by others.

Harassment at work in any form is entirely unacceptable and if proven will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct. Each member of staff carries responsibility for their own behaviour under the policy.

The policy aims to prevent all forms of offensive behaviour but where there is a breach of this policy the person(s) responsible will be liable for disciplinary action. Some harassing behaviour may also be unlawful.

Harassment can take many forms and may be directed in particular against women and ethnic minorities or towards people because of their age, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability or some other characteristic. It may involve action, behaviour, comment or physical contact, which is found objectionable, or which may cause offence, it can result in the recipient feeling threatened, humiliated or patronised and it can create an intimidating work environment.

Racial harassment is racial abuse, either physical or verbal or racist statements comments or jokes which are uninvited and unwanted and tend to humiliate intimidate and might threaten job security.

Sexual harassment includes repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit or derogatory statements, sexually offensive material, or sexually discriminatory remarks. These can be offensive to the employee involved and cause

the employee to feel threatened, humiliated or harassed. These may also interfere with the employee's job performance, undermine job security or create a threatening or intimidation work environment.

The council will provide support for employees who allege harassment. A proper investigation of complaints will take place.

Fair procedures will be followed and instigated promptly to minimise potential stress for the alleged harasser and the complainant.

Warmsworth Parish Council shall act and react with dignity and respect towards employees and they shall ensure that those under their control act in a similar way in their relationship with each other.

PROCESS

Informal Procedure

Wherever possible employees who believe that they have been the subjects of harassment, should tell the person responsible that they find their behaviour offensive and ask them to stop. If the individual feels unable to do this themselves they may ask a friend, their Union Representative or the Clerk to do it for them.

If the alleged harassment continues, or the complainant feels unable to speak directly to the alleged harasser, it may be helpful to write to the person concerned clearly indicating what is considered to be unacceptable behaviour.

Formal Procedure

If the behaviour continues (or the informal procedure seems inappropriate) the matter should be reported in writing to the Clerk giving details of the incidents, when they occurred, any possible witnesses and any discussion or correspondence under the informal procedure. This complaint may be made through a friend or Union Representative. After receipt, the Clerk shall carry out an investigation.

As an alternative to the above, which may be inappropriate, (eg because the alleged harasser is the Clerk), the complainant may raise the matter with the Chair of the Parish Council who shall then conduct an investigation.

The investigation shall be carried out under the terms of the Council's Disciplinary Procedures. In certain circumstances the alleged harasser may be suspended without prejudice on full pay before, during or after the investigation.

During the investigation or resultant Disciplinary Hearing the complainant and alleged harasser will have the right to be represented.

If the allegations are held to be true, disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal may result.

If the outcome of the investigation and/or Disciplinary Hearing is that no formal disciplinary action is to be taken, no record of the complainant will appear on the alleged harasser's personal file.

EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against current or prospective employees with disabilities because of a reason relating to their disability.

RECRUITING STAFF WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities will have full and fair consideration for all job vacancies.

Special arrangements for interview may be needed and these are to be accommodated wherever possible.

In addition to the normal preparations, which are made for interviews, attempts will be made to gain some prior knowledge of any disability, and possible effects, which may have to be discussed.

During selection procedures the disability will only be discussed objectively in relation to the job requirements and, if appropriate and relevant, selection procedures will provide an opportunity for the personal abilities to be demonstrated e.g. manual dexterity.

EXISTING EMPLOYEES BECOMING DISABLED

The council will help employees who become disabled during their working life and wherever possible will assist with their rehabilitation and retraining. The aim is to maintain such staff in employment wherever practicable and reasonable steps to achieve this may involve adjusting working practices and methods as well as redeployment to alternative work.

Where disabled staff are determined to meet the minimum requirements of alternative work they will be afforded priority consideration for such work before considering other internal or external candidates unless other candidates have an equal entitlement to priority consideration under this policy.

AGE RESTRICTIONS

These arrangements are to ensure that age restrictions in employment matters are only applied where reasonably justified. Nothing in this section can over-ride any statutory provisions on minimum ages in employment matters.