

# SHERFIELD ON LODDON PARISH COUNCIL



## Equality Policy

### INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 took effect on 1 October 2010 and replaces the previous antidiscrimination legislation. It simplifies the law removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law in order to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a key measure in the Act which came into force on 5 April 2011. All public bodies and organisations carrying out public functions have a duty to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

The Public Sector Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities for everyone who comes into contact with Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council; irrespective of their characteristics (unless it can be shown that the treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim).

### LEGAL POSITION

To discriminate against someone means to treat them less favourably, to harass or victimise them or to subject them to a provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a disadvantage.

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of the following 'protected characteristics' (as defined in the Act):

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

### COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

This policy is fully supported by all Members of the Council and Employees

Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it is direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. It is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities in the work place and in the delivery of services.

In all its activities the council will have due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## **EMPLOYEES**

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the council.

The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing Society as a whole.

Breaches of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimisation through the council's Discipline and Grievance Procedure.

The council adopts the majority of the model employment contract clauses as devised by the employee professional body in the local government sector (the Society of Local Council Clerks). The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually. Other personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this Equal Opportunities policy to ensure that the council strives to remain an Equal Opportunities employer.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

In exercising its functions and delivering services, the council will have due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty and it will take a proportionate approach when complying with it. Equality issues will be an influence on its policies and decisions and the needs of all individuals in day to day work will be considered.