



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Issue Number	Date	Details of amendments
1	21 st March 2024	Adopted
2	21 st March 2025	Reviewed
3	30 th June 2026	Added in 4.7 – Race Relations Act 2000

1. Introduction

- 1.1 East Grinstead Town Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity and inclusion amongst its employees and eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- 1.2 The aim is that all our employees will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
- 1.3 The Council refers to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Town Policy Statement adopted 20.06.2002.

2. Purpose

2.1 To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality, fairness and respect for all in the Council's employment whether temporary, part-time or full time and not to discriminate on grounds of

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and including civil partnerships
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin)
- sexual orientation
- sex
- religion or age

2.2 East Grinstead Town Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. This includes

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy

- leave for parents
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities

3. Scope

- 3.1 All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training 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.

4. Our Commitment

- 4.1 East Grinstead Council will through its policies and training make the Commitment:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All staff should understand 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.

- 4.2 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.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter 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.

- 4.3 Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, 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.
- 4.4 Make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 4.5 Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- 4.6 Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

- 4.7 East Grinstead Town Council acknowledges the general duty placed upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The Council will continue within its functions and policies to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
 - Promote equality of opportunity
 - Promote good relations between people of different racial groups
- 4.8 The Council recognises that all functions with a public interface are relevant to this duty, particularly recruitment, hiring of facilities, catering, provision of information and burial services.
- 4.9 The Council is committed to ensuring that all members of the public, staff and Councillors are treated fairly, equitably and with respect regardless of colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin.
- 4.10 Where any policy is shown to adversely impact certain racial groups or may amount to unlawful racial discrimination, urgent action will be taken to review and amend the policy appropriately.
- 4.11 In all decision-making, the Council will consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote positive race relations.

5. Our Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

- 5.1 Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in our policy folder on the shared drive. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

- 5.2 Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within 3 months of the alleged discrimination.

Adoption date: **21.03.2024 (new policy)**

Reviewed: **27.03.2025**