

Elmstead Parish Council equality policy

(From the ACAS template “equality policy”)

Elmstead Parish Council is committed to being an effective Equal Opportunities organisation and eliminating unlawful discrimination. This applies to all areas of the Council’s activities; including employment, recruitment and the provision of services. The aim is for our Council to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect at all times.

The policy’s purpose as an employer is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- 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 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
- 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 and/or disciplinary procedures, and any 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

- 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
- decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- 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
- members of the Council will conduct their business in a manner in accordance with this equality policy.

Monitoring and Complaints

The Council's Personnel Committee will have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy as it applies to the Council as an employer.

The Council's Personnel Committee will have responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy as it applies to the Council as a service provider, involving local community and voluntary groups in the monitoring process where appropriate.

Complaints from staff about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with as laid down in the Council's Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate.

Complaints from members of the public about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with through the Council's Complaints Procedure.

Policy adopted by Elmstead Parish Council on 21st February 2019.