



Parish Council Office - The Pavilion - New Barn Close – Prestbury – Cheltenham – GL52 3LP

Prestbury Parish Council Equality and Diversity Policy

Based on the model NALC Policy

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1. Our Commitment

1.1 Prestbury Parish Council (PPC) is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.

1.2 This policy is intended to assist PPC in putting this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

1.3 Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

2. The Law

2.1 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. Under the Equality Act 2010, these are known as 'protected characteristics.'

2.2 Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

2.3 PPC will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes: the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of the services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

3. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

3.1 Direct Discrimination

- where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.
- in limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

3.2 Indirect Discrimination

- where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected

characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

3.3 Harassment

- where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

3.4 Associative Discrimination

- where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

3.5 Perceptive Discrimination

- where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

3.6 Third-Party Harassment

- occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

3.7 Victimisation

- occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint, or raised a grievance, under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

3.8 Failure to make reasonable adjustments.

- failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

4. Equal Opportunities in Employment

4.1 Our approach

PPC will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, risk and rewards broadly, discipline and selection for redundancy.

4.2 Recruitment

- Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements and responsibilities that are necessary for the effective performance of the job.
- Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements and responsibilities for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.
- Disability and personal home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

4.3 Working Practices

- PPC will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done.
- When considering requests for variations to these standard working practices PPC will refuse such requests only if it is considered to have good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so.
- PPC will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. PPC will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

4.4 Equal Opportunities Monitoring.

- PPC will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.
- PPC treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with General Data Protection regulations. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in PPC's privacy notices.

5. Dignity at work

5.1 The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

6. People not employed by PPC

6.1 PPC will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by PPC.

6.2 Bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others should be reported to PPC who will take appropriate action.

7. Training

7.1 PPC will raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

7.2 PPC will raise awareness of all staff engaged to work for PPC to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under existing policies e.g. the Grievance policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Every employee is required to assist PPC to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, PPC for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

8.2 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under PPC's Disciplinary Procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

9. Grievances

9.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use PPC's Grievance Procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

9.2 PPC will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically by PPC to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.