



Wivenhoe Town Council

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

WTC welcomes the many diverse groups and individuals in our community and recognises that this diversity is an asset to be valued and celebrated. We also acknowledge that certain groups and individuals are discriminated against and we find this unacceptable.

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of Wivenhoe Town Council through elected members, employees and others acting on its behalf.

The Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure effective implementation.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which came into force on 5 April 2011, imposes on public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, a duty to take into account:

- The need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- To foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

In particular, the council will work to remove discrimination and to ensure that prospective and present employees and those who may want to use its services are not treated less favourably on the following grounds which are the identified Protected Characteristics as identified in the Equality Act.

The Protected Characteristics

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage & civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief
- sex & sexual orientation

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities, fairness in the workplace and providing good quality services to the local community are all inter-linked. It is recognised that individuals and groups continue to be unfairly discriminated against and it is the council's responsibility to promote good community relations, equality of opportunity and to tackle unlawful discrimination in all of its forms.

How we will reach our commitment

To use our best endeavours and within our means (which will apply to each objective in this document):

- Where possible (it could be possible that to make some services equally acceptable to some, would discriminating against others as people's needs are different) to provide services that are equally accessible to all people, free from prejudice and discrimination and sensitive to the needs of all sections of the community.
- Seek to influence the work and contribution of partner organisations from all sectors by ensuring that equality issues and considerations are fully taken into account when developing strategies.
- Work actively towards eliminating all forms of discrimination, both of a direct and indirect nature.
- Encourage partnership and participation in the development and application of council policy and practices.

Staff Recruitment, Selection and Employment

All WTC 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.

- WTC will ensure that our staff recruitment and selection policies are fair and equitable. We will continue to evaluate our procedures to identify and remove barriers, eliminating discrimination.

Elected Members

- WTC will provide access to training and guidance to Elected Members so that they are aware of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and their legal responsibilities and rights when exercising Council duties and functions.
- WTC will maintain a working/meeting environment that is inclusive, free of discrimination, harassment and bullying, where individuals are treated with dignity and respect.
- WTC will encourage elected members to highlight discrimination and challenge unacceptable language and behaviour.
- WTC will make reasonable adjustments where necessary, so that any obstacles a person faces as an elected member relating to a protected characteristic, are removed, reduced or prevented.

WTC will publicise Council vacancies with a mind to reaching all sections of the community.

Council Decision Making and Services

- WTC will ensure that we treat people with dignity and respect.
- WTC will consider the needs of all individuals in our day to day work. We will try to understand how different people will be affected by our activities so that our policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.
- WTC recognise that people's needs may be different. We will take account of this when making decisions about policies or services and make reasonable adjustments where necessary and if reasonable to do so.
- WTC will consider the three aims of the Equality Duty at the start of the policy/service development/review process and in making final decisions. It will form an integral part of our decision making process.
- WTC will consider what information we have and what further information may be needed in order to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty.
- WTC will take a proportionate approach to the Equality Duty, it will be one of a number of factors that need to be considered in decision making. The weight given to the Equality Duty, compared to other factors, will depend on how much it affects discrimination, equality of opportunity and good relations and the extent of any disadvantage that needs to be addressed. • WTC will aim to provide all information in Plain English and alternative formats on request where possible and it is reasonable to do so.

Working with Partners and Contractors

- WTC recognise that we are responsible for ensuring that any third parties who exercise functions on our behalf are capable of complying with the Equality Duty, are required to comply with it, and that they do so in practice.
- WTC will include a question in any tender documents requesting that contractors confirm if they have an equality policy and for WTC to have sight of this policy where applicable.
- WTC will communicate our Equality and Diversity Policy to partners and contractors.
- WTC will take equalities considerations into account when developing contract specifications and conditions.

Monitoring and Reviewing Our Equality and Diversity Policy

- WTC will keep a record of how decisions were reached to demonstrate that the aims of our Equality Duty were considered. We will consider collecting equality monitoring information if it is useful and relevant to do so.
- WTC will monitor and review our Equality and Diversity Policy at the lessor of every two years or law changes. This review will highlight good practice, identify areas for Equalities and Diversity Policy improvement and consider an Equality Action Plan for the coming year.

Dealing with Complaints and Grievances Relating to Equality

- Complaints and grievances about discrimination will be properly handled through the council's respective policies.

- Breaches of our Equality and Diversity Policy by employees will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Policy into practice

- Ensure that all policies and practices are in line with relevant employment legislation, anti-discrimination legislation and good practice guidelines.
- Integrate equality of opportunity into all aspects of council activity.

Recruit and value a workforce that reflects the make-up of the community.

- Provide equal access to all service users and potential service users according to need.
- Give people who use or might use council services the opportunity to influence the way their needs are met.
- Seek to influence partner organisations in a collective commitment to equality of opportunity.
- In line with government guidance, encourage voluntary organisations to provide evidence of their commitment to equality in terms of their personnel policies and delivery of their services, as a criterion in determining the award of grant aid from the council.
- Ensure that the council has policies that result in services sensitive to the needs of all sections of the community.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policy and practice on a regular basis as determined by law
- Develop a well-defined complaints procedure in dealing with alleged contraventions.

Adopted by Full Town Council 20 December 2021

Reviewed 12 August 2025

