

Equality in Employment Policy

The council, as a major employer in west Norfolk, wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunity in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. The employment related sections of this policy therefore concern all matters directly or indirectly related to employment affecting individuals or groups whether they are actual or potential employees.

We believe that it is in the council's best interests, and those of all who work for it or who live in the area, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available throughout the community are considered when employment opportunities arise. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that all employment related decisions are based solely on objective, justifiable and job related criteria.

The council is committed not only to the legal obligations placed upon it by equalities legislation but also to the positive promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of employment. With this in mind, the council will ensure that all its employment policies, procedures, guidelines and practices reflect and reinforce its commitment to equality

Our aim is to create a working environment which is supportive, prejudice free and which reflects the diversity of our local population. To achieve this aim we will undertake the actions in the following areas:

A. Recruitment, Selection and Appointment

The council will:

1. Develop open, fair and consistent arrangements for the recruitment, selection and appointment of employees, including:
 - (i) Ensuring all advertised posts have a clear and up-to-date job description and a personal specification which outlines the skills, qualifications and experience required to undertake the job. Both the job description and personal specification will only include requirements that are necessary and justified for the effective performance of the job.
 - (ii) Ensuring advertisements for posts provide sufficient, clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post in a manner which does not restrict its audience in terms of any potentially discriminatory factor.
 - (iii) Complying with the requirements outlined in the 'fluency duty' English language requirement for public sector workers (Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016). Clearly outlining in the advertisement and

- relevant personal specification the standard necessary for applicable job roles.
- (iv) Producing recruitment literature which is clear and bias free, including making access to a copy of the Equality in Employment policy available to all job applicants.
 - (v) Requiring all job applicants to complete a standard job application form and requesting monitoring information via a separate part of the form which is held confidentially within Personnel.
 - (vi) Ensuring officers involved in recruitment and selection procedures have received appropriate training, including relevant equalities training.
 - (vii) Ensuring the selection criteria used to determine candidates shortlisted for interview, and the successful candidate for a post, is based only on the information contained within the job description and personal specification for the position.
 - (viii) Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are offered to all applicants to enable them to attend a job interview
2. Work towards the employment of a workforce which represents the community it serves by:
 - (i) Ensuring job opportunities are communicated to all sections of the community
 - (ii) Ensuring there are no barriers which discourage applications from any section of the community
 3. Comply with the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service for relevant posts with regards the employment of ex-Offenders.
 4. Comply with the requirements of the Asylum and Immigration Act with regards ensuring job applicants are eligible to work in the UK.
 5. Ensure that promotions are determined on the basis of ability and other relevant objective job related criteria.

B. Learning, Training and Development

The council will:

1. Recognise the need to provide a range of learning, development and training opportunities to all employees and elected members, regardless of any protected characteristic, to ensure that their potential is harnessed with a view to achieving improvements in performance and service delivery.
2. Maintain our commitment to the principles that:
 - (i) The council is fully committed to developing its employees and elected members in order to achieve its aims and objectives
 - (ii) The council is clear about its aims and objectives and what employees and elected members need to do to achieve them
 - (iii) The council develops its employees and elected members in order to improve performance
 - (iv) The council understands the impact of its investment in people on its performance

3. Encourage all employees to discuss the training and development needs with their line manager at least annually as part of the council's performance appraisal process.
4. Develop training programmes to ensure employees are aware of their responsibilities with regards equalities, to include:
 - (i) training for new recruits via induction
 - (ii) training for managers as part of the annual corporate training programme
 - (iii) training on specific equalities issues as required to support this Policy.
5. Review training and development procedures to ensure there are no barriers which prevent employees from potentially disadvantaged groups accessing opportunities.

C. Working Environment

The council will:

1. Enforce our belief that all employees have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and take steps to ensure this right is protected through our Harassment at Work Procedure.
2. Supply all employees with a copy of the Harassment at Work procedure which provides guidance to employees on what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and which includes definitions of harassment and bullying as follows:
 - (i) Harassment can take many forms, occur on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or a group of individuals. Harassment may, however, be summarised as conduct which is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. It is not the intention of the perpetrator but the deed itself and the impact on the recipient which determine what constitutes harassment.
 - (ii) Bullying is defined as unreasonable, offensive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines confidence and which may cause stress which is unconnected with race, sex or disability.
3. Ensure staff are aware that they are required to comply with the Harassment at Work Procedure and to treat all colleagues with respect.
4. Under no circumstances, condone harassment of any nature. We will undertake to investigate all complaints of harassment fully and as quickly as possible. Investigations will be totally confidential and, when a complaint is found to be justified, disciplinary action will be taken.
5. Provide a group of trained Harassment Advisers to provide employees with information concerning the options available to them through the Harassment at Work Procedure.
6. Provide employees with information relating to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 as required.

7. Include responsibilities in relation to equalities in the job descriptions of senior managers.

D. Conditions of Employment

The council will:

1. Ensure all employees are aware of this Policy via the Employee Handbook and other communication channels as appropriate. Changes and updates to the policy will also be communicated to employees as and when required.
2. Ensure all employees are familiar with this Policy and the council's 'Code of Conduct' and conduct themselves in accordance with these requirements.
3. Ensure all employees receive regular performance appraisal in accordance with the council's performance management scheme. Assessments of performance will be based solely on job requirements and individual ability. Reviews of the scheme will be undertaken to ensure the removal of any barriers for employees from potentially disadvantaged groups.
4. Develop initiatives/procedures to enable employees to balance the demands of their home and work lives, including
 - (i) A caring package
 - (ii) A flexible working hours scheme
 - (iii) A homeworking policy
 - (iv) Procedures for dealing with flexible working requests
5. Give consideration to requests from employees to adjust working times or practices to accommodate religious needs.
6. Put in place any reasonable adjustment required by an employee who becomes disabled during employment, or for a new employee who has a disability.
7. Consider requests from employees for reduced or amended working hours to accommodate external requirements and when vacancies arise, consider part time working as an alternative method of filling the vacant post.
8. Ensure employees with flexible working arrangements receive no less favourable treatment than other employees.

E. Monitoring and Review

The council will:

1. Continue to monitor our workforce profile against our local community profile to work towards a workforce which is reflective of the community we serve.
2. Specifically monitor recruitment, promotion, training opportunities and training take up, performance assessments, grievance and disciplinary cases, leavers and sickness absence on an annual basis.
3. Undertake monitoring based on gender, disability and other equalities criteria as required to support this Policy.

4. Report to the relevant Council Panel and to Management Team on the results of employment monitoring on an annual basis.
5. Comply with the requirement to undertake, and publish, gender pay related information as required by The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.
6. Regularly review our employment monitoring practices and information collecting systems to ensure these comply with legislation.
7. Obtain feedback from employees on the council's equality policies via the Employee Opinion Survey's/specific surveys as may be required from time to time.
8. Review the employment section of this policy regularly, updating the document in line with legislation as required.

Agreed by Cabinet and Full Council January 2018