

Rye Town Council

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Equal Opportunities Statement and Guidelines on Employment Practice

POLICY

A Aims

Rye Town Council aims, as far as is possible and practical, to create conditions whereby staff are selected and treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, socio-economic background, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.

This statement seeks to eradicate unfair and discriminatory practices wherever they occur in the Council and to encourage a diverse community to which all individuals may contribute as fully as possible.

B Principles

i) Discrimination, direct or indirect, based on a person's gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, socio-economic background, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction is unacceptable.

ii) In addition to being unacceptable, such forms of discrimination represent a waste of human resources and a denial of the opportunity for individual fulfilment.

iii) The Council seeks to involve all sections of staff in the continuing development and implementation of its policy.

C Members of the Public

The Council recognises that many members of the public use its services or visit its premises. The Council takes seriously its responsibility to these people and affirms that they will be treated with the same respect of their rights. Likewise, it is not acceptable for staff to be treated unfairly by service users or visitors

D Organisational structure

The Council's Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee is charged with overseeing the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The Town Clerk's responsibilities include communicating the policy and its implications to staff, monitoring its implementation, and guiding the Heritage Centre Manager and Members on recruitment and other matters concerning equal treatment.

E Harassment

The Council is committed to a working environment that is free of unlawful discrimination. Sexual, racial and personal harassment can seriously worsen working and social conditions for staff. Any incidents of harassment will be regarded extremely seriously and can be grounds for disciplinary action.

F Responsibilities

The co-operation of all employees is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives and for ensuring compliance with relevant statutes and codes of practice, lies with the Council.

Intentional breaches of the provisions or spirit of this policy will lead to disciplinary action.

EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

A Recruitment and selection

All relevant material will state that 'The Council is committed to implementing its Equal Opportunities Policy'. The language and any graphics used in recruitment and selection materials will be examined to ensure that it encourages a broad range of applicants and does not reinforce stereotypes.

ii) Wherever possible, all vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally.

iii) Reasonable steps will be undertaken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches under represented groups internally and externally.

iv) Wherever possible, vacancies will be notified to organisations with significant membership or involvement of under represented groups.

Selection criteria (job descriptions and person specifications) will be kept under review to ensure they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

vi) Selection panels shall comprise at least two persons and the Chair of the panel will have been trained in good employment and equal opportunities practice.

vii) Where possible, under represented groups will be involved in the recruitment and selection process.

viii) The reasons for the selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded.

B Recruitment and selection training

Staff and Members likely to be involved in recruitment and selection will receive training in good employment and equal opportunities practice.

Staff and Members responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be responsible for drawing up the person specification. Training in this area will include recognition of stereotypical views and the effects which generalised assumptions and prejudices might have on selection decisions.

C Training and promotion

Wherever possible, special training will be provided for under represented groups to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion. However, recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit.

Wherever necessary, use will be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups.

D Conditions of service

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under represented groups.

Where practicable, work requirements will be varied to accommodate particular cultural and religious needs.

E Personnel Records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the Equal Opportunities Policy only, a record will be kept of all employees' and job applicants' gender, racial origins and disability.

Where necessary, employees will be able to check or correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted.

Any queries about this statement and guidelines, or suggestions for how it might be improved, should be made to:

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