Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council - Equality & Diversity Policy

1 Introduction

Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council has a duty to promote equality and diversity - we are fully committed to meeting this duty and to recognising the benefits that promoting equality brings to Holymoorside Parish Council.

2 Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council is committed to working for equality and fairness for everyone. We work to ensure that respect for equality, diversity and human rights is evident, and promoted in all that we do. In carrying out all our functions we aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and promote equality, diversity and accessibility.

Employment is available to all suitable applicants regardless of age, disability, gender, language, race, sexual orientation and /or beliefs. To ensure this happens we conduct routine Equality Audits of our Employees, to identify any barriers they may have experienced in employment.

The Organisation takes all reasonable steps to improve accessibility, such as the provision of Interpreters for people with English as a second language, and support services for people with disabilities. Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council works in partnership with other agencies and statutory bodies who provide finance and other support to those within the 'protected characteristics,' to improve and ensure accessibility to all our services.

We recognise the importance of respecting and valuing difference, knowing that our business is enriched by diversity.

We aim to ensure that no person we employ, or engage as an Agency Worker, will be treated unfairly or less favourably because of:

• Age • Disability • Gender or gender identity • Gender reassignment • Marriage or civil partnership • Pregnancy or maternity	• Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin • Religion or belief • Sexual Orientation • Trade union membership or activity • Unrelated criminal convictions

We will also monitor our work to ensure that human rights are respected and valued and that the Human Rights Act is complied with.

3 Our Commitment to Dignity at Work

As an employer, we aim to ensure that we promote a workplace culture whereby all employees, and Agency Workers, feel valued and respected, and where nobody carries out their role in fear of prejudice, discrimination, bullying or harassment. We recognise that harassment can take many forms, not all of which may be overt. Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council believes that people should be able to judge for themselves whether or not they feel they are experiencing harassment. The important factor is how the situation is perceived by the victim or any other person, not whether the situation is *intended* to cause offence.

Any reported cases of harassment within Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council will be dealt with promptly and sensitively, using the appropriate procedures. Where any individual feels that they may have experienced discrimination, this will be investigated fairly. Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council aims for all employees, and Agency Workers, to feel comfortable at work, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

4 How We Will Promote Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

In order to ensure that we are effectively working towards the implementation of the aims of this policy:

- We will publish and implement our Policy, outlining how the Council will promote equality and diversity performance. We will ensure that these actions are monitored and reviewed.
- We will ensure that via the Clerk, we continuously scrutinise performance on equality, diversity and human rights issues, and where any areas of concern arise.
- We will embed equality and diversity into the business planning process of Holymoorside Parish Council, ensuring equality, diversity & human rights is an essential aspect.
- We will ensure that Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council staff, and the Clerk receive adequate equality and human rights training as part of their roles.
- We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council information and services are accessible. We will work to reduce the barriers people may face due to disability or language, by arranging appropriate translation, interpretation or transcription materials or equipment when necessary.
- We will carry out equality monitoring activities among job applicants, employees and agencies. Vacancies which need to be advertised externally, will be advertised in as diverse range of publications as reasonably possible, to ensure that they are accessible to as wide an audience as possible.
- We will carry out equality monitoring activities in order to understand the different views different groups of people may have.
- We will ensure that our employees Appraisal systems take account of the need to abide by this policy and to actively promote equality and human rights within all roles.
- We will ensure that all recruitment and selection processes – including those of staff, Trustees and Volunteers – will be conducted fairly, and in accordance with this policy and other Recruitment and Selection policies.
- When working in partnerships with other agencies, we will ensure that equality and human rights are promoted and that all agencies understand the need to abide by equality legislation.

5 Implementing The Policy

Recruitment and Selection of volunteers and employees

All positions are open to all individuals who have the required level of skill, knowledge and / or experience.

All job adverts are to be Council approved and placed in publications which have a diverse circulation.

All job applicants should receive a copy of the equality policy and procedures, as well as a full job description to enable them to assess their suitability for the position.

Training

Appropriate training on and off the job will be accessible to all volunteers and employees. They will be encouraged to take advantage of all relevant training opportunities.

Where an individual is returning to the organisation following a prolonged absence, additional training and support will be offered.

Where a position changes due to technology and / or reorganisation, appropriate training and support will be offered to the affected individuals.

All induction trainees will be made aware of the organisation's equal opportunities policy and procedure.

Health and Safety

Discrimination, intimidation and harassment can seriously compromise the Health and Safety of all connected with the organisation. As such, it is the responsibility of all who are aware of such activity to

bring it to the attention of the organisation's management, quickly and discreetly (although the Council accepts that this may not always be easy for the victim). All reported incidents will be treated in confidence by management.

Management will work with people who are connected to the organisation and whose health limits their capabilities, to ensure their Health and Safety, through conducting through objective assessments of the safety of their environment and where appropriate offering alterations / adaptations to the position, or examining the possibility of alternative work.

Development and Promotion

Ability, motivation, commitment, past experience and qualifications are the qualities used to determine an employee's promotion potential.

Development and training will be offered to all suitably motivated individuals where opportunities exist.

Length of service will not determine suitability for promotion as it can indirectly discriminate against those who may have had long term illnesses or career breaks or are employed on a fixed term basis.

6 Policy Responsibilities

The Clerk of Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council is required to adhere to the Equality & Human Rights Policy and refrain from using discriminatory language or displaying discriminatory behaviour within the Council. All employees and the Clerk are also required to abide by the staff Code of Conduct, which includes obligations to treat others with respect and to abide by equality legislation.

The Equality & Human Rights Policy requires a genuine commitment from everyone within the organisation. Overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with the Councillors/Clerk.

If any employee feels they have not been treated in accordance with the policy, they can make a complaint to The Clerk using the Grievance Procedure.

If any employee, or Agency Worker, feels they have not been treated in accordance with the policy, they should speak to the Clerk in confidence in the first instance. All such complaints or grievances will be dealt with appropriately and sensitively and nobody who has raised such a complaint will be victimised. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the organisation's informal and formal grievance and disciplinary procedures.

7 Conclusion

Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council understand the importance of promoting equality, diversity and human rights across all our functions and we will work to effectively monitor that the principles of the policy are being adhered to.

8 Legislation

This policy takes into account existing equality legislation, including the following, which the Council will adhere to:

- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

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