

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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1. Our Commitment

Lancing Parish Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all its activities. The Council will create an environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and in which no individual or group is disadvantaged.

The Council will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149) and will:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between different groups

The Council also recognises socio-economic disadvantage as an important equality consideration, although it is not considered a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

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 and ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, religion or belief or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. 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 The council 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 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 is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.
- 3.2 Indirect discrimination is 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 is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage or civil partnership, and 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 this conduct.
- 3.4 Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

- 3.5 Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they don't, 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 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. Scope

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy applies to:

- All employees of Lancing Parish Council, whether permanent, temporary, fixed-term, full-time or part-time
- Volunteers and work experience placements
- Councillors
- Contractors, consultants and agency workers engaged by the Council
- Job applicants and prospective Councillors
- Members of the public, service users and community groups engaging with the Council

The principles set out in the policy apply to all areas of the Council's work and decision-making, including, but not limited to:

- Recruitment and employment practices
- Training and development
- Performance management
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Service delivery and community engagement
- Procurement and commissioning
- Access to Council facilities, services and events
- Decision-making processes

All individuals acting on behalf of Lancing Parish Council are expected to uphold the standards outlined in this policy and to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, dignity and inclusion at all times.

5. Equal Opportunities in Employment

- 5.1 The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.
- 5.2 Recruitment
Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed

objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

5.3 Working practices

The council 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 and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

5.4 Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, sex/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.

5.5 The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

5.6 Dignity at Work

The Council has a separate Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment 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 the Council

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

6.2 Employees should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the Clerk who will take appropriate action.

7. Training and Prevention

7.1 The Council will provide training in equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

7.2 The Council will provide training to all staff engaged to work at the Council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. The Council will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

7.3 We have carried out an assessment to assess the risk of different forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and third-party harassment, occurring in our workforce, the steps we could take to reduce those risks and which of those possible steps are reasonable. This risk assessment will be reviewed regularly.

- 7.4 We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises and reporting any criminal acts to the police.

8. Responsibility for Implementation

- 8.1 Lancing Parish Council has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed at least every two years, to ensure it remains commensurate with the law and best practice. The CEO/Clerk will oversee the implementation of this policy.
- 8.2 The HR Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all equal opportunities policies and procedures and reporting on the progress made in achieving equalities targets to the Full Council. The CEO/Clerk has overall delegated (under LGA 1972 S101) responsibility for coordinating the day-to-day operation of the policies and procedures.

9. Responsibility and Liability

- 9.1 Every employee is required to assist the Council 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, the Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- 9.2 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

10. Grievances

- 10.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the Council's grievance procedure to make a complaint.
- 10.2 The Council 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.

11. Related Policies

All Council policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they comply with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The following directly relevant policies and procedures support Lancing Parish Council's implementation process:

- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the Council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the Council will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed; the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal

opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring . If changes are required, the council will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

13. Action Planning

13.1 Staff Recruitment and selection procedures

Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed and updated and updated in light of emerging equalities legislation and guidance offered to all relevant staff on drafting job descriptions and person specifications. Annual data monitoring will be undertaken in relation to recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion, pay grading, disciplinary cases, grievances and harassment in respect of genders, age, disability and race/ethnicity. Any areas of identified inequality will be addressed.

8.2 Positive action measures will be put in place to support under-represented groups in specific areas, such as women seeking management posts, and the employment of ethnic minorities and disabled staff.

8.3 Training

All employees, volunteers and Councillors undertaking recruitment and selection will be trained in equality issues. Equality and diversity training will be included in induction sessions and induction packs for all newly appointed staff. Line managers with responsibility for staff will receive training in equality and diversity matters, including the relevant law and their duties. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff attend equality and diversity training within three months of their appointment.

14. Service Delivery and Accessibility

The Council will ensure that services are accessible to all members of the community by:

- Holding meetings in accessible venues
- Providing reasonable adjustments where required
- Ensuring digital content meets accessibility standards where practicable
- Considering the needs of diverse groups in decision-making

15. Equality Aims – Protected Characteristics

11.1 Gender reassignment

Lancing Parish Council will not discriminate against any individual who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone gender reassignment. The Council will ensure that trans employees, Councillors, and service users are treated with dignity and respect and that confidentiality is maintained where appropriate.

11.2 Age

Lancing Parish Council will eliminate unlawful age discrimination and will review policies to ensure that they comply with age discrimination legislation. Monitoring will be undertaken to identify any areas of inequality.

11.3 Sexual Orientation

Lancing Parish Council will eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

11.4 Disability

Lancing Parish Council will remove barriers to participation by disabled people wherever possible. Staff who become disabled whilst working with the Council will be offered reasonable adjustments to enable them to continue working. Monitoring will be undertaken to identify any areas of inequality.

11.5 Race/Ethnic Origin

Lancing Parish Council will encourage participation of black and minority/ethnic groups in all its activities. Lancing Parish Council will ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Monitoring will be undertaken to identify any areas of inequality.

11.6 Religion of Belief

Lancing Parish Council includes people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds and will respect the needs and requirements of people who adhere to a range of cultural and religious beliefs. This will include staff needs in relation to dietary requirements, and requests for leave and facilities for religious observance.

11.7 Marriage and Civil Partnership

Lancing Parish Council will not discriminate against employment because a person is married or in a civil partnership.

11.8 Pregnancy or Maternity

In pregnancy and maternity, Lancing Parish Council will focus on ensuring fair and equitable treatment, eliminating discrimination, and promoting equal access to care, including protection against unfair treatment and dismissal, and ensuring access to maternity leave and pay.

11.9 Sex

Lancing Parish Council will eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, particularly regarding protected characteristics like sex, which includes being male or female. The act protects individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on sex and other protected characteristics.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY DECLARATION:

I have read and understood Lancing Parish Councils Equality and Diversity Policy and agree to work to the expected standards. Regardless of my background and circumstances, I agree to treat all colleagues and visitors with respect and dignity while carrying out the duties and responsibilities of my role at Lancing Parish Council.

Signature.....

Date.....

Print name.....

PLEASE RETURN SIGNED TO THE CEO & CLERK TO THE COUNCIL