

# KNIVETON PARISH COUNCIL

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### 1 THE POLICY

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees and users of Kniveton Parish Council, irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief, or sexual orientation ('the **protected characteristics**'). Kniveton Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- 1.2 All employees, whether part time, full time or temporary, and users of the Council's services, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and users will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of Kniveton Parish Council.

### 2 THE LAW

- 2.1 This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:-
- Equality Act, 2010 (and associated Codes of Practice)
  - The Protection from Harassment Act, 1997
- This list is not exhaustive.

### 3 Statement on Equal Opportunities

- 3.1 Kniveton Parish Council recognises that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to equal treatment. We aim to ensure that no Kniveton Parish Councillor, employee, volunteer, organisation, job applicant or individual to whom we provide services, will be discriminated against by Kniveton Parish Council on any unfair grounds whatsoever.
- 3.2 We aim to ensure that Kniveton Parish Councillors, employees, volunteers and staff working with individuals and with organisations for which Kniveton Parish Council provides services do not suffer discrimination, and where this occurs, Kniveton Parish Council commits itself to taking positive action against such discrimination.

## **4 Kniveton Parish Council as employer**

- 4.1 Kniveton Parish Council is fully committed to providing equality in the workplace and all opportunities for, and during employment, will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation ('the **protected characteristics**'). We aim to create a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all staff, customers and suppliers are treated with dignity and respect.
- 4.2 Kniveton Parish Council will not unlawfully discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment and selection or in the opportunities afforded for employment, training or any other benefit. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively. We aim, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that all our working practices are applied fairly and consistently and, where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to avoid or overcome any particular disadvantage these may cause and to promote equality.
- 4.3 Kniveton Parish Council respects an individual's right to choose whether or not to belong to a trade union and membership status will have no bearing on an applicant's suitability for employment or result in any detrimental treatment when working for the Company.

## **5 Specific Responsibilities**

- 5.1 Kniveton Parish Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act, 2010 and associated legislation and for observing relevant Codes of Practice.
- 5.2 The Parish Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and for ensuring that all employment-related policies, procedures and practices adhere to this policy.
- 5.3 All staff have a responsibility not to discriminate or harass other staff clients/customers; and suppliers and to report any such behaviour of which they become aware to their Manager.
- 5.4 Managers are responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy and must apply the policy as part of their day-to-day management of the Company.

## **6 General Practices:**

- 6.1 Kniveton Parish Council states its wholehearted support for the principles and practices of equal opportunity and recognises that it is the duty of all members and employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated

community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony.

- 6.2 Kniveton Parish Council will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the organisation through the application of policies which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. The Parish Clerk will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.
- 6.3 Kniveton Parish Council will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be taken where a disabled person is put in a detrimental position and such reasonable adjustments remove the detriment.
- 6.4 Kniveton Parish Council recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or behaviour, compromising invitations, demands for sexual favours and similar unwanted behaviour. Racial harassment is similarly unwanted treatment, but is concerned with derogatory treatment and language on racial grounds. All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated by Kniveton Parish Council. Sexual and racial harassment are regarded as unlawful discrimination and additionally may also be subject to criminal proceedings. All such cases will be dealt with under the appropriate Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.
- 6.5 Kniveton Parish Council recognises that the detriment a disabled person endures as a consequence of their disability can, in many instances, be removed by the adoption of reasonable adjustments. Kniveton Parish Council is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.
- 6.6. Any complaints of this nature will be fully investigated and treated with the strictest confidence. Any individual found to be responsible for such behaviour, following a thorough investigation, will be subject to disciplinary action. All employees, job applicants and contractors working for Kniveton Parish Council will be made aware of this policy.

## **7 Forms of discrimination**

- 7.1 The following are forms of discrimination that this policy aims to avoid:
- Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. Direct discrimination can also occur by way of association, which is when a person is

treated less favourably because, for example, their spouse or partner or other relative has the protected characteristic.

- Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in that way has the right to complain. To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate business reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.
- Victimisation occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because he/she has raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action, in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination, against the Company or because he/she has supported someone else in doing this.
- Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable. Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period of time, and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they nonetheless find unpleasant. Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to a protected characteristic it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.
- Discrimination arising from Disability In addition to the above, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified. Furthermore, employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled applicants, employees or other workers are not substantially disadvantaged.

## **8 Creating equal opportunities in the workplace**

8.1 There are a number of ways in which the Kniveton Parish Council aims to ensure equal opportunities in the workplace. These include:

- **Recruitment and selection**

Recruitment and selection procedures will be free from bias or discrimination. Recruitment procedures will be conducted objectively and will be based upon specific and reasonable job-related criteria. Decisions regarding an individual's suitability for a particular role will be based on aptitude and ability.

We will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that disabled applicants are not substantially disadvantaged.

Wherever possible, vacancies will be advertised as being suitable for flexible working, to encourage applications from individuals seeking work on a part time or job share basis.

Kniveton Parish Council will consider taking appropriate positive action to enable or encourage applications from persons with a protected characteristic that is under represented in the organisation.

- **Career development and training**

All staff will be given an appropriate induction to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their full potential and Kniveton Parish Council will not unreasonably deny an employee access to training or other career development opportunities. These will be identified as part of an ongoing performance management process and will be determined objectively, taking into account the needs of the Council and available resources.

Selection for promotion will be based on objective criteria and decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

- **Terms and conditions**

Our terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly and benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff who should have access to them, as appropriate.

Kniveton Parish Council operates a pay and benefits system that is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias to ensure that all employees are rewarded fairly for their contribution and loyalty

Terms and conditions of employment for part-time employees will be provided on a pro-rata basis to full-time employees. Similarly, the terms and conditions for fixed term employees will be comparable with those given to permanent employees, except when different treatment can be objectively justified.

- **Employment policies and practices**

Kniveton Parish Council aims to ensure that employment policies and practices, including any rules or requirements, do not directly or indirectly discriminate and are applied in a non-discriminatory manner. In particular, we will ensure that all disciplinary decisions are fair and consistent and that selection for redundancy is based on objective criteria.

Kniveton Parish Council will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the working environment or any work arrangements that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage these cause disabled staff.

We will aim as far as reasonably practicable to accommodate the requirements of different religions and cultures and will consider requests from employees to vary or change their working hours to enable them to care for a dependant.