



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

## History of Policy Changes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation</b>	<b>Changed by</b>
27 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	V1	Director of Finance & Resources		

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

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## 1. Our commitment

Weston-super-Mare Town Council (“the Town Council”) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure fairness and equality for all employees, councillors’, job applicants, contractors, volunteers, service users and members of the public. The Town Council will not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Town Council recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and that it may be intentional or unintentional. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Town Council will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations when developing policies, delivering services and managing employment practices.

We aim to create an inclusive culture where differences are respected and valued, dignity is promoted, and individuals are supported to reach their full potential.

## 2. Legal duties

### **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 provides the main legal framework for equality and discrimination law in the UK.

Under section 149 of the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires the Town Council, as a public authority, to have due regard to the need to:

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

Marriage and civil partnership are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, but they are not covered by the PSED requirements to advance equality and foster good relations.

### **Specific duties**

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require the Town Council to:

- Publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the PSED; and
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

### **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023**

From October 2024, employers have a new legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment. The Town Council is committed to meeting this duty through clear policies, training, reporting mechanisms and prompt action where concerns arise.

### **Other relevant legislation**

This policy also takes account of, but is not limited to:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

## **3. Discrimination**

Discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated and will be addressed promptly.

The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment (including sexual harassment)
- Victimisation
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Associative discrimination
- Perceptive discrimination

This policy applies:

- In the workplace;
- During work-related activities, events and training;
- When dealing with service users, contractors, suppliers and members of the public; and
- In any context connected to employment or service delivery.

All employees and councillors are expected to comply with this policy and to report suspected or actual discriminatory behaviour.

#### 4. Disability and reasonable adjustments

The Town Council recognises its duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, applicants and service users, and that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat disabled people more favourably.

Employees are encouraged to disclose a disability so that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments can be considered.

Where difficulties arise at work due to a disability, employees should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance. With HR support, reasonable adjustments will be explored, which may include consultation with occupational health or medical advisers where appropriate.

If an adjustment is considered unreasonable, the reasons will be explained and alternative solutions explored.

The Town Council will regularly review the physical features of its premises to ensure they do not place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage and will take reasonable steps to improve access.

#### 5. Accessibility

The Town Council will comply with its statutory duties in relation to accessibility under the Equality Act 2010.

In particular, the Town Council will:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage to disabled employees, applicants and service users caused by a provision, criterion or practice, physical feature.
- Make reasonable adjustments where required by law;
- Anticipate the needs of disabled people when designing policies, services and employment practices;
- Provide information in accessible formats where this is a reasonable adjustment.

Accessibility will be considered as part of policy development, service delivery and employment practices, and through the use of Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

#### 6. Responsibilities of the Town Council

The Town Council is responsible for:

- Approving this policy;
- Ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently;
- Publishing equality information annually; and
- Reviewing equality objectives at least every two years.

The CEO/Town Clerk is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of this policy;
- Ensuring compliance across the organisation; and
- Ensuring that suspected breaches are investigated and managed fairly and consistently.

HR is responsible for:

- Communicating this policy to employees;
- Supporting managers with implementation;
- Monitoring workforce equality data in line with data protection legislation; and
- Supporting training and awareness activities.

Managers must:

- Apply this policy fairly and consistently;
- Seek advice where required; and
- Act promptly on concerns or complaints.

All employees and councillors must:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Treat others with dignity and respect; and
- Challenge and report discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

The Town Council will consider equality and inclusion in its decision-making processes and will use Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for significant policies and decisions.

## 7. Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Town Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Serious acts of discrimination or harassment may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.

Individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination may raise concerns through the Grievance Procedure or the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. Complaints will be handled sensitively, confidentially and investigated as appropriate.

Victimisation of anyone raising a concern is prohibited. Malicious or deliberately false allegations may be treated as misconduct.

## 8. Equality impact statement

The Town Council will monitor and review this policy to ensure it does not discriminate.

Equality Impact Assessments will be used to assess the potential impact of policies and decisions on protected groups, including (but not limited to): age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity

## 9. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Town Council and updated where required to reflect changes in legislation, guidance or organisational practice

## 10. Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives 2023–2027

The Town Council has adopted the following equality objectives. Progress will be reported annually:

1. Promote staff health, wellbeing and mental health through appropriate support and interventions.
2. Ensure all staff receive regular training on equality, diversity and inclusion and understand the Town Council's legal responsibilities.
3. Promote equality and inclusion in recruitment, selection and promotion, including fair processes, flexible working and reducing bias.
4. Ensure the working environment is accessible as is reasonable practicable, as far as possible, and inclusive for all staff.
5. Reduce the incidence of sexualised language and behaviour among staff and volunteers.
6. Reduce gender bias and promote gender equality.
7. Increase support for LGBTQIA+ staff and foster a safe, inclusive workplace where people can be themselves.