



Equality and Diversity Policy

This document sets out the Council's policy for Equality and Diversity in Employment. This policy sits alongside the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

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Town Clerk

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Introduction	3
Scope	3
The Equality Act 2010	4
Our Commitment as an Employer	4
Our Commitment as a Service Provider	4
Equal Opportunity Policy Statements	5

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction

Keswick Town Council is an Equal Opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. Whilst this policy stands on its own, it stands alongside Keswick Town Council's Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

The Town Clerk has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy, and as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees 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 the Town Council.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Town Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with the Town Clerk, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Town Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all elected members and employees of Keswick Town Council and the contractors and other parties who act on its behalf. Elected members and employees have responsibilities when representing the Town Council or carrying out their functions, responsibilities and duties to act in accordance with this and other policies of the Council. This policy will apply in particular to council decision making, the delivery of services and activities, community consultation and engagement,

procurement and employment. All elected members and employees have a responsibility for equality and in ensuring that we meet our duties and obligations.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act protects people against discrimination, harassment or victimisation in employment and as users of public services on nine protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Gender re-assignment
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

Our Commitment as an Employer

- i. To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.
- ii. Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- iii. Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- iv. Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- v. We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

Our Commitment as a Service Provider

- i. We aim to provide services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class.
- ii. We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients.
- iii. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.
- iv. We have clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.
- v. Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

The Equality Act 2010 s.4 introduced the term 'protected characteristics' to refer to groups that are protected under the Act.

Age

Keswick Town Council will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with dignity and respect;
- ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

Disability

This is a physical or mental impairment which has (or is likely to have) a substantial effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities for a period of a year or more. Certain medical conditions are considered a disability from the outside, whatever their impact on day-to-day activities. Protection from discrimination covers a person who has had a disability in the past.

There is no unfavourable treatment if the 'discriminator' did not know or could not reasonably have known the person had a disability. More favourable treatment of disabled persons is not unlawful discrimination against non-disabled people.

Keswick Town Council will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems and alternative formatting of written documents.

Race

Race includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

Keswick Town Council will:

- challenge racism whenever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the Town Council.

Gender re-assignment

Keswick Town Council will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men;

- offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to go gender reassignment.

Sexual Orientation

Keswick Town Council will:

- Ensure that we take account of the needs of lesbians and gay men; and
- Promote positive images of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals

Religion or belief

Keswick Town Council will:

- Ensure that employee's religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated where possible; and
- Respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Pregnancy or Maternity

This protected characteristic covers the course of a pregnancy and any illness suffered as a result of the pregnancy or because a woman is exercising or is seeking to exercise the right to compulsory, ordinary or additional maternity leave.

Keswick Town Council will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take into account the needs of our employee's pregnancy or maternity.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Keswick Town Council will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employee's marriage or civil partnership.

Ex-offenders

Keswick Town Council will:

- prevent discrimination against our employees regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

Equal Pay

Keswick Town Council will:

- ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Adopted February 2022

Next review February 2023