



BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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# Equality and Diversity Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010. The legislation covers a prescribed set of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.2 It also covers prohibited conduct including discrimination, adjustments for disabled persons, victimisation and harassment; services and public functions; premises; employment; contracts; and advancement of equality. The latter provision specifies a public sector equality duty, which applies equally to town and parish councils.

## **2. Policy**

- 2.1 Brackley Town Council (BTC) is committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. In the implementation of this policy BTC will:
  - ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, age, sex, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, neurodiversity, socio-economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction.
  - promote diversity and equality and value the contributions made by individuals and groups of people from diverse cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and distinctive backgrounds.
  - challenge inequality and less favourable treatment wherever practicable.
  - promote greater participation of under-represented groups by encouraging positive action to address inequality
  - promote an environment free of harassment and bullying on any grounds in relation to all staff, councillors, contractors and visitors attending the Council's offices or meetings.
- 2.2 The task of promoting social inclusion, tackling discrimination and encouraging equal opportunities are key issues for Brackley Town Council and the Council is committed to:
  - ensuring the accessibility of our physical and virtual environments for all
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advancing equality of opportunity between different groups
  - fostering good relations between different groups.

The policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it conforms to all the relevant legislation.

## **3. Commitment of the Council**

- 3.1 BTC is committed to Equality and Diversity and to the vision of improving the quality of life for local people.

3.2 The Town Council aims to be:

- Accessible
- Accountable
- Fair
- Inclusive
- Proactive
- Professional
- Responsible

3.3 Brackley Town Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in all aspects of its work:

- Through the delivery of our services to the community by ensuring that within reason, these services are accessible to all and that we fully recognise the diversity of people's needs.
- In the Town Council's leadership role, working with partners to promote the importance of treating every individual with dignity and respect.

#### **4. Scope of the Policy**

4.1 This policy is designed to value diversity and to ensure equality of opportunity and access to services and that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- Age
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or nationality origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Neurodiversity
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

#### **5. Objectives of the Policy**

5.1 To improve delivery, information and access to services we will:

- Ensure all employees, contractors and users of our services are informed about our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Apply equal opportunities principles to work undertaken for the council by external contractors, other organisations in receipt of council funding and in work with our partners.
- Rectify any elements of our work which have the potential for discrimination and prejudice.

5.2 To promote equality and diversity with other partners we will:

- Promote tolerance and respect between diverse groups and individuals.
- Acknowledge and celebrate, wherever possible, the variety of lifestyles and cultures within the town.
- Challenge all forms of discrimination within the Town Council and the wider community.
- Support the development of communities and assist them in challenging discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.

5.3 All members of staff and Councillors remain personally responsible for ensuring that they act within the law. The Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring that staff perform their duties in a lawful manner and that proper training and support is provided accordingly. In certain circumstances the Town Council could be vicariously liable for actions carried out by staff purportedly in the Town Council's name. Any member of staff or Councillor may be personally liable if, whilst on Council business and despite guidance and training from the Council, they behave illegally in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

## **6. Employment**

6.1.1 Brackley Town Council is an equal opportunity 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, neurodiversity, 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. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.