

# Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



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# 1. Introduction

This policy applies to all employees and potential employees of Hartlepool Borough Council together with anyone else working on council premises including, agency & casual workers, contractors, consultants and suppliers.

Hartlepool Borough Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in employment. The policies and practices of the Council aim to promote an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and values the diversity of all people (see Appendix I for a definition of the terms used in this policy). At the heart of our policy, we seek to treat people equally, fairly, with dignity and respect reflecting the Council's Value and Behaviour Framework.



**Our values and behaviours connect us all together and importantly connect us with the local community we serve.**



- We are curious and look for ways to improve our services
- We are flexible in our approach
- We look for innovative solutions



- We promote fairness and equality
- We value and include everyone
- We celebrate difference and value diversity



- We work towards our vision for Hartlepool
- We are driven to achieve good outcomes
- We go the extra mile to deliver the best services we can



- We are caring and people-centred
- We grow talent and develop our workforce
- We are supportive of each other and the people we serve



- We are kind and courteous to all
- We listen to and value others
- We involve and communicate with others



- We are honest and act with integrity
- We are transparent and communicate openly to build trust
- We care about our people, our communities and our borough

## 2. Policy Statement

The council will take every reasonable and practical step to ensure that no person working for the council, job applicants, or any member of the public using the council's premises or services will receive less favourable treatment (direct discrimination) or conditions that cannot be shown to be justifiable (indirect discrimination) which are, or are perceived to be, associated with any of the following protected characteristics:

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

or because of trade union membership or non membership [see Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992], part time working [see Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000] or fixed term working [see Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment Regulations 2002)].

In addition to the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will also give consideration to those who are care leavers and the Armed

Forces Community (as established in our Armed Forces Covenant). We will also consider inequality related to poverty and disadvantage recognising that this relates to individuals as well as children and families. We will develop a single impact assessment process for equality, diversity & inclusion by bringing together the existing Equality Impact Assessment and the Child and Poverty Impact Assessment.

We recognise that we have a moral and legal duty to promote equality, diversity & inclusion, whilst eliminating unlawful practice within the workplace and our services. Affording staff full dignity at work promotes good employee relations and satisfaction, and results in a motivated, productive and creative workforce, that leads to service improvements.

Our Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will help all those who work for us to achieve their full potential so that the talents and resources of the workforce are utilised fully to create an environment of opportunity for all.

We welcome and celebrate the diverse cultures, backgrounds, faiths and beliefs of all peoples we engage with and will take proactive steps to ensure that the policy is known to all employees, potential employees and organisations with which we work. It should be clear to all employees that Hartlepool Borough Council has a zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination.

## 3. Implementing Equality, Diversity & inclusion

We will ensure that equality, diversity & inclusion is embedded in all our policies, procedures, day to day practices and external relationships. Equality, diversity and inclusion will be promoted throughout the employee life cycle:



### Be your whole-self

To enhance team working and the service we deliver to our communities we want to encourage employees to be themselves at work. Through integrity, honesty and openness we want all of our employees to bring their whole-self to work and to be able, on an equal basis, to participate fully and effectively in working life.



### Staff Equality Networks

Through our Staff Equality Network we ensure our employees have a collective voice that helps us understand, improve and monitor our policies and ways of working. This gives us vital insight into the employee experiences of inclusion at the Council and ensures those with protected characteristics are supported, protected and encouraged at work.

### Data & Governance

We believe it is important that employees are comfortable sharing their equality information in confidence. This helps us to continually improve our policies and work-place and to further encourage inclusion & diversity.

Every employee is responsible for ensuring our activities and interactions at work adhere to this policy. However, the following are responsible for the governance of this: Executive Leadership Team; Corporate Strategy; Human Resources; and our Staff Equality Networks acts as a support & feedback function.



**Aim: Encourage the highest quality candidates from all backgrounds to apply and ensure equal and fair treatment throughout the recruitment process.**

**The Council will strive to ensure that:**

- Through recruitment and promotion, our workforce better represents the community we serve
  - All posts including secondment and promotion opportunities are advertised widely in accordance with Council policy to provide equality in employment for all people. Advertising may be restricted (see Procedure for Managing Restructures and Redundancy)
  - All advertisements reflect the job description and person specification and do not use words or phrases which indicate bias (unless there is an occupational requirement to do so)
  - The statement "Hartlepool Borough Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in employment" is included on the Council's recruitment portal together with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement outlining the Council's commitment to implementing equality, diversity & inclusion, in particular its arrangements in relation to recruitment and selection
  - All applicants complete an equality monitoring form which will not be made available to the selection panel and will be used to ensure the policy is being implemented
  - All job applicants who report a disability and who meet the essential requirements of the person specification will be guaranteed an interview in accordance with the Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure. All such candidates will then be considered on their merit and abilities
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- All employees are recruited and promoted on the basis of ability, objective and measurable job related criteria are consistently applied to all candidates
  - All employees involved in shortlisting and interviewing will have due regard to shortlisting and interview guidance, including ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has attended the council training course on Safer Recruitment
  - Selection criteria are applied and scoring related to the selection or rejection of individual candidates is recorded
  - We always ask questions relating to reasonable adjustments that would be needed for an assessment such as an interview or other process designed to assess a person's suitability for a job
  - We only ask questions about reasonable adjustments needed for the job itself after the offer of a job has been made (unless these questions relate to a function that is intrinsic to the job)
  - We ask questions about an employee's health or disability where they relate to a person's ability to carry out a function that is intrinsic to the job prior to an offer of a job being made

**Aim: All employees are encouraged to reach their full potential through appropriate fair access to learning, development and career progression opportunities.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- New employees are made aware of the Council's Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy during the induction process
- Relevant Equality, Diversity and Inclusion modules are included in learning opportunities, where appropriate, and form an integral part of recruitment and selection training
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awareness learning is available as part of the Council's learning and development programme to all staff
- All employees are encouraged to invest in their development and consider opportunities to develop their competencies and skills, taking into account a broad range of learning and development options in the Council
- Learning opportunities for employees are appropriate and accessible, in line with organisation and job related needs
- Learning and development opportunities for relevant employees are advertised widely
- Learning and development programmes, where possible, are planned with the needs of part time employees considered as well as those of full time employees
- Learning and development programmes are designed to support this policy and take into account the different preferred learning styles of different groups of employees
- Line Managers, supervisors and leaders responsible for the management of people will be required to complete a New Manager Induction module that includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



**Aim: All policies covering pay, benefits, grades and terms and conditions are formulated and implemented with regard to equal opportunity.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- Terms and conditions, including pay arrangements, are non-discriminatory and are applied fairly and consistently to all staff
- The use of flexible working arrangements are promoted wherever possible, to try to balance individual staff circumstances with organisation or operational requirements
- Access to work requirements (reasonable adjustments) for those with a disability are considered in a fair and open manner
- The appropriate use and application of the Council's arrangements for 'Special Leave' are promoted to assist staff who may require time off work for personal or domestic reasons, to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations



**Aim: A working environment that is inclusive and where no form of discrimination is tolerated.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- Complaints of discrimination, bullying, victimisation or harassment are dealt with in a fair and transparent manner
- Discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation of employees or workers will be addressed under the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure this also includes sexual harassment
- All employees have the right to raise any complaint not covered by the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure through the Council's Grievance Procedure
- Prompt action is taken to investigate any employee grievance concerning discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation
- Support is provided to any employee who is the victim of discrimination or perceived discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation in the course of their employment
- Disciplinary rules and standards are applied consistently to all employees within the Council's employment





**Aim: Performance & Attendance issues are addressed in a fair and open manner.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- Performance or Attendance issues will be addressed in a fair and consistent manner, and will take account of any disabilities declared by employees
- Appropriate support will be provided to employees to ensure they can demonstrate their capabilities and effectively fulfill their job role



**Aim: Employees affected by proposed or implemented changes to the composition of the workforce are treated fairly and consistently.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- Employees affected by any proposed or implemented changes to workforce composition are consulted with, together with Trade Union Representatives, in line with the Managing Restructures and Redundancy Policy and Procedures
- Employees who are affected by changes to the structure of the workforce are treated fairly and with dignity
- Fair and impartial selection criteria will be applied in all redundancy situations
- Every effort will be made to retain skills and abilities within the workforce by redeploying employees who are affected by changes to the structure of the workforce
- An appropriate balance will be reached to comply with legislative requirements, protect employees and provide equality of opportunity when implementing new staffing structures



**Aim: That employees leaving the council do so with dignity.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- Employees who leave the Council on health grounds are dealt with sensitively by Managers
- References provided to future employers will be fair
- Leaver surveys are monitored and reviewed. Also an annual leaver report will be submitted to the Executive Leadership Team for trend analysis



**Aim: Regular monitoring and review so that the effectiveness of this policy can be measured and information used to support informed decision making.**

The Council will strive to ensure that:

- All policies and procedures which impact on employees are regularly reviewed to ensure they are free from discrimination
- Confidential records of employees and applicants are maintained in order to monitor the progress of equality, diversity & inclusion practices within the Council, and all reporting is anonymised before being made available
- Data collected for the purpose of equality, diversity & inclusion monitoring is reviewed as a minimum on an annual basis so that information on the effectiveness of this policy can be considered
- Reports will be published on Council web pages annually in line with legislation
- Continuous review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to comply with changes in legislation
- Equal Pay Audits are undertaken
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is supported by an equality, diversity & inclusion action plan. This is to ensure EDI is embedded into our working practices and is central to our culture

