



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Version 2 as adopted by Full Council on 11th December 2023
Revision by the Policy and Procedures Committee due December 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Helsby Parish Council is committed to meeting the varied needs and circumstances of its residents, members and employees and to ensuring that its services are equally appropriate to all without discrimination. In support of this commitment, the council has adopted this policy statement for employment and service delivery.
- 1.2. We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances and will take action to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eradicated from our policies and practices.
- 1.3. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no person 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. It also seeks to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.
- 1.4. This policy is fully supported both by staff and council members. It will be monitored and reviewed annually.

2. Our Commitment as an Employer

- 2.1. This policy applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, election, 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.
- 2.2. All personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination. The council strives to create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued. We will consult regularly with the Cheshire Association of Local Councils and other agencies to identify any gaps in our employment policies and take action to remedy them.
- 2.3. 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 our workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the parish council.

- 2.4. Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the parish council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. 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 parish council
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. Training, development and progression opportunities will be available to all staff. We will consider sympathetically any request for flexible working, job-share, travel arrangements, child and dependant care leave and will guarantee interviews for disabled people who meet the essential criteria for a job.

3. Our Commitment as a Service Provider

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. Parish councillors take the lead in promoting equality, ensuring equalities issues are given due consideration within their area of responsibility, in decision-making and in monitoring services.
- 4.2. Any equalities work undertaken by the parish council will be actively supported by the Parish Clerk.

5. Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

AGE

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- 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

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- wherever possible, seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of: loop systems; Braille facilities; alternative formatting; and sign language interpretation.

RACE

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racists incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the parish council.

GENDER

We 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 undergo gender reassignment.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

We 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

We will:

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

PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY

We 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 account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

We 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 employees' marriage or civil partnership.

EX-OFFENDERS

We 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

We 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.

6. Complaints

6.1. The Parish Council has approved a complaints procedure, details of which can be found on the Parish Council's website: www.helsbyparish.org.uk, or obtained from the Parish Council's Office at: Helsby Parish Council, Helsby Community Sports Club, Callender Way, Helsby, Cheshire, WA6 0FX, telephone: (01928) 726433; or e-mail: parishclerk@helsbyparish.org.uk.