

WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Policy and Procedure for Equality and Diversity

Windlesham Parish Council positively welcomes and aims to support the growing diversity of the community we serve and the people we employ. Further, the Council recognises the changing patterns of households, the expansion of the villages and the diverse requirements that will need to be met in the future.

The Council believes that opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights and actively oppose all forms of discrimination.

Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give of their best. It is our belief that equal opportunities are essential to the values that lie at the heart of Windlesham Parish Council and, as such, should extend to the employment of its staff and its work with constituents, parishioners and partners.

To this end the Parish Council acknowledges and strives to embed in all its activities the following basic rights for all:

- To receive a professional and appropriate service
- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- To receive encouragement to reach their full potential

Of course these rights carry with them responsibilities, not just for Windlesham Parish Council as a corporate body, but also its staff, volunteers, service users and those who supply services on our behalf. We must all recognise and uphold these rights and act in accordance with them in dealings with others. Councillors and any employees have a personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community, at work, by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony in the provision of dedicated services to people on equitable terms.

Our statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010

As a public body leading and speaking on behalf of the community the Parish Council must play its part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all. The Equality Act 2010 places a new Equality duty on the Parish Council to work to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who don't share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who don't share it.

No individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination because of the following characteristics (known as protected characteristics under the Act)

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Marital status and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnic origin
- Nationality

Discrimination and harassment is unacceptable and contrary to the Council's aim of providing quality services and the recruitment of staff.

Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Windlesham Parish Council will comply with all current and future legislation referring to equality and diversity and will aim to promote good practice in all aspects of the organisation.

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if so required by legislation or additional material.