

Policy Document Ref	001
Review Date	February 2024
Date of Next Review	February 2027

Equal Opportunities Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The Council is an equal opportunity employer. It is committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that its workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination because of Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This policy has been adopted as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

1.2 The Protected Characteristics are: -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

1.3 It is the Council's aim to ensure that all employees achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria.

2 What is unlawful discrimination?

2.1 **Direct discrimination** – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.

2.2 **Associative discrimination or discrimination by association** – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.

2.3 **Discrimination by perception** – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.

2.4 **Indirect discrimination** – occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral.'

2.5 **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.

2.6 Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint, or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination, or are suspected of doing so.

3 Commitment

3.1 Bewdley Town Council is committed to ensuring that all ~~our~~ employees and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.

3.2 Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria.

3.3 Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job.

3.4 Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decision except where necessary and relevant.

3.5 All employees have a right to equal opportunity and have a duty to implement this policy. Discrimination is a serious disciplinary matter which will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

3.6 Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds should raise the matter through the Council's grievance procedure.