

HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY OF ACCESS POLICY

1. Introduction:

The Parish Council is committed to the principles and promotion of equality of access. It has a special role to play in the promotion of equal access in the community, both as an employer and as a service provider to the population of Hawkwell. This policy is intended to ensure that all members of the Parish Council, employees, volunteers and the users of the Parish Councils services are treated with fairness and consistency, free from discrimination.

2. Legal Position:

It is unlawful for employers to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as "protected characteristics".

3. Our commitment:

Everyone is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. Breaches of our equality of access policy will be taken seriously and duly investigated. Employees' misconduct could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Anyone who feels that there has been unfair treatment, victimisation or harassment is entitled to complain to the Clerk of the Council.

4. Objectives:

The overall objectives of the Policy are:

- To prevent direct and indirect discrimination in all areas of employment, service provision and delivery in respect of sex, race, marital or family status, religion, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, age or sexual orientation.
- To examine and wherever possible enhance equality of access at all points of contact with service users.

- Where possible to consult service users on the effectiveness of the policy and possible improvements to it.
- To ensure that employees, volunteers and Councillors are fully conversant with the Policy and receive training if necessary.

5. Monitoring:

The Parish Council shall annually review service operations in order to ensure adherence to the Policy.

6. Complaints:

Complaints made under this Policy should be addressed in writing to the Clerk. Any complaints received will be reported to the Parish Council at its next meeting and duly investigated. This Policy does not take away the right of anyone wishing to pursue a complaint direct with another body, but it is hoped that any aggrieved person will wish to pursue their complaints with the Parish Council first so that the matter may be quickly and effectively investigated.

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