

Introduction

This policy communicates the commitment of New Milton Town Council, its Members and Officers to meeting the **Public Sector Equality Duty** which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies, representation and services that are efficient and effective, accessible to all and which meet different people's needs. It strives for fair treatment of employees, job applicants and all directly connected with council business and should be used proactively to prevent discrimination of any form.

Promotion of equality and diversity in relation to New Milton Town Council - “The Council”

It is our policy to provide representation, information, facilities, services and employment to all irrespective of the following protected characteristics

- Gender
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Religion or belief (including political)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)

The Council is opposed to all forms of discrimination. All people and employees will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any grounds. All council decisions will be made objectively and without discrimination.

The Council recognizes that equality must be at the core of every relationship, be it member to officer, officer to member, officer to residents etc. and will actively challenge discrimination. This policy informs Council Members and Officers in their development of sound and effective practices that impact on the town and surrounding areas.

The Council wishes to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity. We will work to remove barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realizing their potential and contributing fully to the community to develop a culture that positively values diversity.

Equality Commitments

The Council is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Fulfilling our legal obligations under equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with this and associated policies
- Taking lawful affirmative and positive action where appropriate

Implementation

The Town Clerk has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. In order to implement this policy he or she shall:

- Communicate the policy to Members, the staff team and members of the public
- Incorporate this policy into general practices
- Ensure that other persons or organisations will comply with the policy in their dealings with the Council
- Log any incident reported by victim or witness and take appropriate action.

Monitoring and Review

The Council will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this policy. Its effectiveness will be reviewed annually, and action taken as necessary.

In addition to our internal procedures, any person has the right to pursue complaints of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.