HALLOW PARISH COUNCIL
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HALLOW PARISH COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Our commitment

Hallow Parish Council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.
This policy supports that commitment and aims to ensure that all employees, councillors and those who interact with the council are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
The council is committed to creating a working environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment or the provision of services on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership. These are known as protected characteristics.
Discrimination after employment, such as refusing to provide a reference for a discriminatory reason, may also be unlawful.
The council will not discriminate against or harass members of the public when providing services and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people can access council services.

Types of unlawful discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** – treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** – applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic without objective justification.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- Associative discrimination – discrimination because of association with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination – discrimination based on a perception that someone has a protected characteristic.
- Third-party harassment – harassment of staff by individuals not employed by the council.
- Victimisation – treating someone badly because they have made or supported a complaint under equality legislation.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** – not taking reasonable steps to remove disadvantages faced by disabled people.

Equal opportunities in employment

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, promotion, training, pay, discipline and redundancy.

Recruitment
Job and person specifications will be limited to what is necessary for effective performance. Selection decisions will be based on objective criteria, with reasonable adjustments made where required for disabled applicants.

Working practices
The council will consider flexible working requests fairly and will only refuse them for sound business reasons unrelated to any protected characteristic. Reasonable adjustments will be made to support employees with disabilities.

Dignity at work
The council has a separate Dignity at Work Policy which sets out how bullying and harassment complaints will be handled.

People not employed by the council
The council will not unlawfully discriminate against anyone using or seeking to use its services. Any bullying or harassment by contractors, visitors or members of the public should be reported and will be addressed appropriately.

Training
The council will raise awareness of equality and diversity responsibilities among those involved in recruitment and decision-making. All staff will be made aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to dignity at work.

Your responsibilities
All employees are responsible for supporting this policy and must not engage in discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Such behaviour is a disciplinary offence and may amount to gross misconduct. Employees may also be personally liable under equality legislation.

Grievances
Employees who believe they have been discriminated against should raise the matter through the council's grievance procedure. No one will be penalised for raising a genuine complaint.

Monitoring and review
This policy will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it remains effective and compliant with the law. Personal data collected for monitoring purposes will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

Date of policy: January 19th 2026
Approved: Hazel Kemshall (Chair)
Supersedes: Previous Equality and Diversity Policy
Date for next review: January 2029