

# HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

### 1. Background

Halewood Town Council (HTC) is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and actively promotes equality of opportunity for everyone in employment and service delivery.

The Town Council agrees wholeheartedly with the principles of equal opportunities and declares its opposition to any form of less favorable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination. The Town Council recognizes it is the duty of all Town Councilors, employees and volunteers to accept 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.

The policy sets out how the Town Council intends to meet its commitments by working alongside everyone, irrespective of their age, race, religious beliefs, creed, colour, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex or sexual orientation.

### 2. Legal Position

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

- **Age**
- **Race**
- **Gender**
- **Disability**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Religion or belief**

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

The council is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or service users, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents or offending background.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Town Councilors, employees, and volunteers of Halewood Town Council. It is accepted that Elected Members of the council are not employees, but they do share responsibility with employees when representing the Town Council or carrying out the functions of their elected office. Therefore, all aspects of this policy apply to Elected Members.

Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Town Council.

### 4. Purpose & Aims

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken).

Halewood Town Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimization or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

The policy aims to achieve the five core values which embrace and provide a framework within which employees can work:

- **Equality** Recognition that everyone is of equal value and should be respected according to individual needs and abilities.
- **Reasonableness** To be fair, reasonable and just in all council activities.
- **Accessibility** Providing equal access for all in employment and service delivery.
- **Empowerment** Helping individuals take on responsibility so that they can influence and participate in the decision-making process.
- **Quality** Obtaining the highest standards in service delivery.

### 5. Our Commitment

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing Society as a whole.

Breaches of this policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimization through the council's Grievance procedure.

This policy is fully supported by all Members of Halewood Town Council, is complementary to other Human Resources Policies and will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

## 6. The Law

The policy is implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation and codes of practice, which include:

- Equal Pay Act, 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act, 1975, as amended by Equality Act, 2006
- Gender Reassignment Regulations, 1999
- Race Relations Act, 1976, as amended in 2000 by the Race Relations Amendment Act
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, as amended in 2005
- The Protection from Harassment Act, 1997
- Halewood Town Council's Code of Conduct

### **Linked Policies**

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Last Review Date</b> | November 2025 |
| <b>Next Review Date</b> | May 2027      |
| <b>Review Cycle</b>     | 2-yearly      |