

TOWN AND CINQUE PORT OF HYTHE



Hythe Town Council
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

WWW.HYTHERTC.GOV.UK/POLICIES/HR

This Policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on: 4 March 2021

Minute 277.20

This Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Council at its meeting held on: 26 April 2021

Minute 318/20

GOVERNING BODY: HYTHE TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, OAKLANDS, 1 STADE STREET,
HYTHE, KENT. CT21 6BG



This policy is produced in accordance with guidelines set down by NALC.

Policy Statement

Hythe Town Council recognises the diversity of its local community and the value which brings to community life. The Council will aim to provide each member of the community with fair and equal treatment in all its activities.

Hythe Town Council is committed to pursuing an equal opportunities approach in the employment of its staff and the way in which services are provided for the public.

Hythe Town Council recognises its statutory duties under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meeting them by complying with this policy.

Hythe Town Council is committed to promoting equal access to services, facilities and equal treatment for all employees or job applicants irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage/civil partnership
- Pregnancy/maternity

These are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and this commitment is managed in such a way that Hythe Town Council complies with Equal Opportunities legislation and Codes of Practice.

Links with other Council Policies and Strategies

This policy is one of the Council's most important and underpins other corporate policies, procedures and strategies, therefore providing a strong foundation for Equality of Opportunity in the Council and the services it provides.

This policy links to the Council's other Human Resources Policies and should be read in conjunction with them.



Equality of Opportunity in Service Delivery

Hythe Town Council is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and access to its facilities.

The Council will achieve this by:

- Recognising and accepting that individuals or groups are denied equality through direct or indirect discrimination either intentional or unintentional.
- Providing regular training for all Councillors and employees, so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people.
- Delivering services that are relevant, of the highest possible quality, and accessible.
- Providing clear information about our services, facilities and where necessary making them available in a variety of formats.
- Ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective.
- Assessing the impact of and monitoring our services to ensure that they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made.
- Ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.

Equality of Opportunity in Employment, Training, and Organisational Development

Hythe Town Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity.

All employees will have a part to play in achieving this and the Council will ensure that individuals are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support the Equal Opportunities Policy.

This applies to all employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, and all job applicants. This policy has relevance to those concerned with recruitment, training, and promotion.

No employee or prospective employee should receive unfair or unlawful treatment due to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, or pregnancy/maternity. Hythe Town Council will seek to identify and act upon all unlawful discrimination that denies individual opportunity on any of the criteria mentioned above. Employees and applicants have the right to complain about unfair discrimination through the appropriate procedures.

The Council will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that its recruitment and selection policies and procedures are equitable and fair so that the best people are appointed to deliver its services.
- Only consider applicants for jobs based on their relevant experience, skills, and abilities unless a genuine occupational qualification exists for specific posts.
- Ensuring that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time, or employed on a temporary basis.



- Recognising and accepting that individuals or groups are denied equality through direct or indirect discrimination either intentional or unintentional.
- Providing regular training for all Councillors and employees, so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people.
- Delivering services that are relevant, of the highest possible quality and accessible.
- Providing clear information about our services and facilities and where necessary making them available in a variety of formats.
- Ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective.
- Assessing the impact of and monitoring our services to ensure that they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made.
- Ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.
- Making sure that equal consideration is given to people's needs, whilst developing flexible and responsive employment opportunities to tackle those needs.
- Encouraging and supporting employees to reach their full potential within the resources the Council has available to it.
- Taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying, or discrimination, offering support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents.
- Taking disciplinary action against employees who discriminate against people who work for the Council or who seek employment with the Council.

Contractors and Suppliers

Hythe Town Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all contractors and suppliers carrying out work on behalf of the Council have the appropriate policies and working practices in place to ensure Equality of Opportunity and to comply with the requisite equality legislation and guidance.

The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- Contractors and providers have employment policies, procedures, and practices that do not discriminate.
- Monitor whether contracts and commissioning arrangements meet these equality commitments.

Management and Supervision of this Policy

Council and Committees

Strong leadership is essential to ensure that this policy is embedded at both strategic and service delivery levels of the Council. Whilst the Full Council will be ultimately responsible for the implementation of this policy, ongoing review of the policy will be the responsibility of the Personnel Sub-Committee with day-to-day implementation, management, and monitoring being the responsibility of the Town Clerk.



Councillors

Councillors as a corporate body have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that the principles of fairness and equality guide the decision-making process.

Line Managers

It is the responsibility of line managers to:

- Ensure that within their areas of responsibilities, the standards established within this policy are followed.
- Contribute to the development of an equal opportunities action plan.
- Review the effectiveness of the policy and all related action plans and communicate their views to the Town Clerk.

Employees

All employees must:

- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity.
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- Not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not victimise anyone because of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination.
- Not harass, abuse, or intimidate others because of their race, gender, etc.
- Not pressurise job applicants to discourage them from applying or taking up a post.

Breaches of Policy

Any breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Serious offences, such as harassment and victimisation, will be treated as gross misconduct.

Complaints

Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Council's grievance procedure <http://www.hythetc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Disciplinary2520and2520Grievance2520Policy2520 2015.pdf>

Existing Employees

Employees wishing to raise a grievance alleging unlawful discrimination during an internal selection procedure should discuss this with the Town Clerk in the first instance. An appeal, where necessary, should be made via Council's adopted Grievance Procedure.



Prospective Employees

Any prospective employee wishing to raise a complaint should do so, in writing, to the Town Clerk within 15 working days (at the latest) of the alleged incident. An investigation will then be conducted in accordance with the Council's adopted Grievance Procedure. A report will then be submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration and their ruling will be final.

The individual will receive written notification as to the outcome of the investigation.

Information and Training

Employees will be provided with appropriate training regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, and pregnancy/maternity.

The Council will:

- Seek to ensure that all employees are developed by the provision of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities in line with organisational needs.
- Provide training that complies with the Council's Equalities Policy.
- Include a copy of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy as part of the induction programme.
- Provide equalities awareness training as part of its corporate learning and organisational development programme.
- Include equality training as part of its member development programme.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Town Clerk will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist in the effective implementation of this Policy. Where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group(s), the Town Clerk will advise the Council of the need to develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

Alternative Formats

The Equality Act 2010 – copies of this document in large print or font size, can be made available for those with sight impairment on request by emailing admin@hythe-tc.gov.uk or telephoning 01303 266152.

Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, copies of this document will be available for inspection in the Council Office and posted on the Council website:

www.hythe-tc.gov.uk



