



EMERSONS GREEN TOWN COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity Policy

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1. Introduction

Emersons Green Town Council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.

This policy is intended to assist Emersons Green Town Council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

2. The Law

Equality Act 2010. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

Emersons Green Town Council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

3. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic

such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic. Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

4. Equal Opportunities in Employment

Emersons Green Town Council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Recruitment: Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Working Practices: Emersons Green Town Council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if Emersons Green Town Council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so.

Emersons Green Town Council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. Emersons Green Town Council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring: Emersons Green Town Council will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process. Emersons Green Town Council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in Emersons Green Town Council's privacy notices.

5. Dignity at Work

Emersons Green Town Council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

6. People Not Employed by Emersons Green Town Council

Emersons Green Town Council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by Emersons Green Town Council.

You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to Emersons Green Town Council (clerk@emersonsgreen-tc.gov.uk) who will take appropriate action.

7. Training

Emersons Green Town Council will raise awareness of equal opportunities, and provide training where appropriate, to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

Emersons Green Town Council will raise awareness of equal opportunities, and provide training where appropriate, to all staff engaged to work at Emersons Green Town Council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

8. Your Responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist Emersons Green Town Council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Emersons Green Town Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Emersons Green Town Council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

9. Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use Emersons Green Town Council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

Emersons Green Town Council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

10. Monitoring and Review

Emersons Green Town Council will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups.

Emersons Green Town Council will include an Equality and Diversity impact assessment at the end of all formal reports and proposals.

Emersons Green Town Council will also gather information on the ethnic and gender composition of residents when completing surveys, application forms or entries. This

information will be anonymised and used to establish any inequalities and to improve how we engage with and provide for local community.

Emersons Green Town Council will review the equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by monitoring. If changes are required, Emersons Green Town Council will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants, employees and members of the public for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

This policy will be monitored periodically by Emersons Green Town Council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.