



Highley Parish Council – Equality & Diversity Policy (2026 Update)

To be adopted at the Annual Council Meeting – 12 May 2026

1. Our Commitment

Highley Parish Council is committed to promoting equality, eliminating unlawful discrimination, and ensuring that all employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors and members of the public are treated with dignity and respect.

From the uploaded document:

“The council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.”

We aim to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and supported, and where diversity is recognised as a strength.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the **Equality Act 2010**, which protects individuals from discrimination based on the following **protected characteristics**:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, caste, ethnic or national origins)
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Council also recognises its duties under other relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

From the uploaded document:

“It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex... race... sexual orientation, religion or belief...”

3. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The Council recognises the following forms of unlawful discrimination:

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a policy or practice that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic without justification.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.

Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act.

Associative and Perceptive Discrimination

Discrimination based on association with someone with a protected characteristic, or based on perception.

Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments

Not taking reasonable steps to remove barriers for disabled people.

4. Equal Opportunities in Employment

The Council will ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment, including:

- Recruitment and selection

- Training and development
- Promotion
- Pay and benefits
- Working conditions
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Redundancy selection

From the uploaded document:

“The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training...”

Recruitment

- Job criteria will be limited to what is necessary for effective performance.
- All candidates will be assessed objectively.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled applicants.

Working Practices

The Council will consider the impact of working arrangements and will make reasonable adjustments where required.

Monitoring

The Council will monitor workforce composition and recruitment outcomes to identify and address inequalities.

5. Dignity at Work

Highley Parish Council is committed to a workplace free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The Council has a separate **Dignity at Work Policy** which outlines how complaints will be handled.

From the uploaded document:

“Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying... is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities.”

6. People Not Employed by the Council

The Council will not discriminate unlawfully against members of the public, contractors, volunteers or service users.

Any bullying or harassment by third parties must be reported to the Clerk or Chair, and appropriate action will be taken.

7. Training and Awareness

The Council will:

- Provide equality and diversity training for those involved in recruitment or decision-making
- Raise awareness among all staff and councillors
- Provide additional training for managers and supervisors
- Take proactive steps to prevent third-party harassment

From the uploaded document:

“The council will provide training... to help them understand their rights and responsibilities... and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.”

8. Responsibilities

All employees, councillors and contractors must:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Not discriminate, harass or victimise others
- Report concerns or incidents promptly
- Cooperate with investigations

Serious breaches may be treated as misconduct or gross misconduct.

9. Grievances

Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against should raise the matter through the Council’s **Grievance Procedure**.

From the uploaded document:

“The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds.”

No individual will be penalised for raising a genuine concern.

10. Monitoring and Review

The Council will monitor:

- Workforce composition
- Recruitment outcomes
- Complaints relating to discrimination or harassment
- The effectiveness of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or best practice.

11. Adoption

This Equality & Diversity Policy is adopted by Highley Parish Council on:

12 May 2026 at the **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.**