

Iminster Town Council
Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedures
Approved by Council 13 December 2016



Policy

Iminster Town Council's intention is to be an effective equal opportunities organisation. This means it will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone has equal access, and is treated with respect, in relation to

- employment opportunities,
- to its services and
- to all its activities.

Further, Iminster Town Council values difference, and recognises the value that different backgrounds, skills, outlooks and experiences bring to the community.

Background Information

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010. The legislation covers a prescribed set of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It also covers prohibited conduct including discrimination, adjustments for disabled persons, victimisation and harassment; services and public functions; premises; employment; contracts; and, advancement of equality. The latter provision specifies a public sector equality duty, which applies equally to town and parish councils.

Procedures

Role of Councillors and Employees

All Councillors and employees are responsible for implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. It is important that all individuals who are either employed by the Town Council or serve on the Town Council as a Councillor appreciate that they have a responsibility and a role to play in the provision of equal opportunities.

As a Service Provider

Iminster Town Council will strive to ensure that all services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council are made accessible to all individuals and groups equally and without discrimination;

All service users will be treated with respect. Actions, behaviour and attitudes should consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual;

Iminster Town Council will, wherever appropriate, work in partnership with other agencies in the area, including the County and District Councils, voluntary groups and community organisations to promote equal opportunities;

Iminster Town Council will ensure that all contractors directly supplying goods and services or executing works for, or on behalf of, the Council comply with this Council's stated policy on equal opportunities.

Iminster Town Council will:

- provide training for all staff and Councillors in equal opportunities awareness and customer care, emphasising equality of treatment in service delivery;

- ensure that no member of the public is disadvantaged, or treated less favourably than others, in terms of access to Council services. Where the Council's practice, policy or procedures are found to make access impossible or unreasonably difficult, we will take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to change these practices, policies or procedures;
- ensure that, wherever practical, all public buildings and premises owned or managed by the Council are accessible to all. Where this is impractical in the short-term, we will provide reasonable alternative methods of access so that no member of the public is disadvantaged by physical barriers;
- recognise the importance of communication in attaining equity and quality services which are responsive to the needs of all local people, for example through the provision of information in large print and on audio tape on request;
- comply with all relevant legislation relating to discrimination and equity.

As an Employer

Iminster Town Council is making every effort to create a workplace where individuals are valued, listened to and treated with respect in an environment that seeks out and values the insight, experience, contribution and full participation of all staff.

Iminster Town Council will:

- ensure its employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities to each other, the customer and the organisation regarding equal opportunities issues;
- treat part time staff fairly and equally
- Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability
- provide ways in which individuals can communicate any concerns via competent named personnel;
- treat any unacceptable behaviour seriously;
- ensure all employees realise they have a key role in implementing this policy and are expected to take personal responsibility in ensuring its success;
- provide awareness training for all employees and Councillors, ensuring opportunities to develop relevant competencies are available to implement the policy

Complaints

Complaints from members of the public about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with through the Council's Complaints Procedure

Complaints from staff about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with as laid down in the Council's Grievance Procedures.

Action will be taken under the Town Council's disciplinary policy and procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Equality and Diversity Policy & Procedure Reviews and Updates

Date	Change