

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCILPOLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Council are totally committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment and are opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other unjustifiable discrimination.

The Council recognises that it is in its own best interest and that of the community it serves to ensure that employment opportunities are equally accessible to all. The Council will use all lawful means of pursuing and maintaining this aim.

The Council will take every possible step to ensure that employees are treated equally and that decisions are made within the spirit of equality of opportunity for all.

2. INFORMATION

The Council will take whatever practical steps are available in order to ensure that their commitment to equality of opportunity is publicised. All employees of the Council and prospective job applicants will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.

3. RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

The Council will ensure that recruitment and promotion will be made purely on merit and based on fair and equitable job related criteria. Advertisements and job profiles will reflect clearly the specific needs of the position and will eliminate any bias which could lead to unjustifiable discrimination, either direct or indirect.

The Council's recruitment procedures will reflect the need to ensure that all stages of the process are conducted on an objective basis to ensure that no discrimination, whether direct or indirect, takes place.

The Council will continually review its policies and practices in respect of recruitment and promotion to ensure that they continue to be fair and also that its actions continue to be within the appropriate legislation, particularly the Equal Pay Act 1980, Sex Discrimination Acts, 1975, 1986, **the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003, Gender Reassignment Act 2004, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) regulations 2003.**

Where the statistics demonstrate that certain groups are under represented within the Council workforce, the authority will seek to encourage applications from the disadvantaged groups in order to attempt to redress the balance.

4. TRAINING

All employees will be afforded the same access to suitable training relevant to their current and future needs and to that of the organisation. All employees will be given the opportunity to discuss their training needs with their managers and supervisors and appropriate training will be developed as far as practicable within the Council's Training Policy. Training will be given to all concerned with the equal opportunity issues of the Council and these will include policy makers, personnel staff, line managers, staff involved in the recruitment procedure and trades union representatives. All employees will be given a copy of the policy and kept up to date with any future changes.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The authority are committed to implementing national and local conditions of service in a fair and equitable manner to all employees and to ensure that such application does not create discrimination to any individual or group of employees of the Council.

6. EQUAL PAY

The Council is committed to the principle of equal pay for all of our employees and aim to eliminate any gender bias in our pay systems.

It is in the interest of the Council to ensure that we have fair and just pay systems and employees have confidence in the process of eliminating gender bias. We are therefore committed to working in partnership with recognised trade unions to implement in full the Local Government Job Evaluation Scheme.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The overall development and advice on the implementation of the Council's equal opportunities policy within employment will rest with the Personnel and Training Officer. Each Director will be responsible for its implementation within their department and will be responsible for ensuring that all employees within his/her supervision receive appropriate training and guidance.

8. LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

As far as practicable the Authority will arrange working patterns and practices to assist employees and prospective employees who may otherwise be disadvantaged by the current standard arrangements. For example the Council has adopted a flexi time approach to working, also encourages Job Share **and has introduced a homeworking policy**. These measures are designed to support the continued employment of those who otherwise could be disadvantaged by personal and family commitments.

The Council will continually review working patterns and will consider any individual request under this heading through the Central Resources Committee.

9. PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Wherever practicable and within their financial resources the Council will make any necessary and reasonable adaptations to buildings and to equipment in order to assist disadvantaged, but particularly disabled, individuals to seek and sustain employment with the Authority.

10. MONITORING

The Principal Personnel Officer will develop and maintain appropriate systems of monitoring the Council's performance against the equal opportunities policy. The Council require that each Director co-operates in the collection and dissemination of information to ensure that an annual report may be presented to the Central Resources Committee by the Principal Personnel Officer for Members' information. **In addition to the above the Authority also sets rolling three year targets in relation to Best Value Performance Indicators in relation to equality and employment.**

11. COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Job applicants, whether internal or external who feel that they have been discriminated against during the recruitment and selection, process should write to the Head of Paid Service with details of their complaint. The Head of Paid Service will then investigate and determine what, if any, action should be taken.

Any employee who considers that they have suffered any kind of harassment or that they have been discriminated against in relation to recruitment, promotion or training opportunities on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other unjustifiable discrimination should register their complaint through the established grievance procedure.

12. DISCIPLINE

All Council employees, having received a copy of the equal opportunities policy, are required to act within the conditions set out therein and also within the general philosophy of equal opportunities. They are expected to ensure that their actions cannot be construed as discriminatory or that they do not either directly or indirectly personally harass other employees or members of the public. Any employee found to be in breach of the Council policy will be liable to disciplinary action under the Council's procedures.

13. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly and not less than once every 2 years in conjunction with the relevant trade union and/or staff consultation groups, to ensure that it continues to be effectively implemented