



**GREAT
SANKEY**
PARISH
COUNCIL

Equal Opportunities Policy

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Great Sankey Parish Council is committed to:
 - a. encouraging equality and diversity
 - b. promoting dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued
 - c. creating an environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
 - d. ensuring training and development opportunities for all staff and Councillors who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their skills and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 1.2 Great Sankey Parish Council, in providing services and facilities, is committed against the unlawful discrimination of members of the public.
- 1.3 Great Sankey Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among its members and employees and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 1.4 This policy is intended to outline the equalities commitment by the Council to members, employees and members of the public.

2. Legal Position

- 2.1 It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:
 - a. age
 - b. disability
 - c. gender reassignment
 - d. marriage and civil partnership
 - e. pregnancy and maternity
 - f. race
 - g. religion or belief
 - h. sex or gender
 - i. sexual orientation

These are 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

- 2.2 The Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Council provides equality, fairness and respect for all staff, Councillors, members of the public and any other agency that comes into contact with the Council.
- 3.2 Through this policy, the Council endeavours to oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 All Councillors and staff are required to read and understand their responsibilities under this policy.
- 4.2 The Clerk has overall delegated responsibility for co-ordinating the day-to-day operation of the policy and the development, maintenance and monitoring of supporting procedures.
- 4.3 The Clerk will ensure that complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination are dealt with in a serious manner. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the council's grievance and disciplinary procedures and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- 4.4 The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that staff and Councillors are trained and informed in relation to this policy. This includes acknowledging rights and responsibilities under this policy in addition to understanding that staff and Councillors can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination against staff, councillors and members of the public.
- 4.5 All Councillors and staff have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with both the requirements and essence of the Equality of Opportunity Policy. This includes not just adhering to the policy but to actively promote inclusivity, to be aware in their daily work of anything they or others do that may put some groups at a disadvantage and to develop inclusive working practices.
- 4.6 Councillors and staff are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

5. Complaints

- 5.1 Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly or not in accordance with this policy may complain to the Parish Clerk following the Council's Complaints Policy.
- 5.2 Any reported breaches of this policy will be subject to an investigation and dealt with appropriately in a timely manner.