

Equal Opportunities Employment Policy

Adopted on 30 November 2021

Purpose of the policy

Burntwood Town Council (BTC) aims to be open and accountable employer, providing a working environment that is free from all forms of discrimination. This policy is designed to fulfill that ambition and ensure that all employees and job applicants are treated fairly and equally, and with dignity and respect.

The policy applies to all staff working for BTC including employees and other workers, such as agency workers, temporary workers and contractors. All staff are expected to observe this policy into practice.

The policy will be reviewed, as appropriate, to take account of developments in equalities legislation and diversity best practice.

Policy Statement

BTC is committed to providing equality in the workplace and all opportunities for, and during employment, will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation (“the protected characteristics” as defined by the Equality Act). We aim to create a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all staff, contractors, partners, volunteers and parishioners are treated with dignity and respect.

Regarding disability the scope is broad. The Government’s statutory guidance to the Equality Act states that: ‘A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can be ... developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia.’ Employers are expected to make appropriate adjustments to their working practices and places of work to create a positive culture that supports physical disability as well as neurodiversity. Workers are also protected against ‘discrimination by association.’ This may arise when a worker is treated less favourably because they have a dependent with a protected characteristic.

BTC will not discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment and selection or in the opportunities afforded for employment, training or any other benefit. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively. To help us do that pre-interview advice will be sought from the appropriate advisory body on what, if any, adjustments are needed in respect of any protected characteristic.

Key Principles and Responsibilities

- We will develop a culture and working environment free from discrimination and harassment and act promptly on any complaints of discrimination and harassment
- We will challenge direct and indirect discrimination in all personnel practices and provision of services
- We will provide a safe, secure and accessible working environment which values and respects individual's identities and cultures
- We will encourage all staff to reach their full potential and to support this we provide opportunities for training, development and progress for all staff.
- We will oppose and avoid all forms of discrimination and will implement the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This includes meeting its requirements in respect of pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and disciplinary matters, dismissal, redundancy, leave and reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled staff.
- Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions
- Staff will be encouraged and enabled to report any discriminatory acts or practices.
- Staff must not encourage or attempt to make others practice discrimination.
- Staff will not victimise anyone who has reported or provided evidence of discrimination.
- Staff will not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others.

Equal Opportunities during the Recruitment Stage

BTC will follow the following procedures for recruitment to ensure that all applicants are treated appropriately and fairly and that no candidate is rejected because of gender, race, any protected characteristic.

This means our recruitment procedures will meet the following criteria:

- The job description is set so that all applicants are assessed against the exact same criteria and nothing else.
- The post is advertised in a variety of locations, such as job centres, online and in the press so that it is available to as wide an audience as possible
- An interview panel will be put in place to ensure that more than one person's opinions are considered when deciding on whom to award the position to.
- No questions will be asked that are not relevant to the job.
- Applicants will not be asked about any protected characteristic.
- Female applicants will be treated the same as male applicants. Disabled applicants will be treated the same as applicants without disability. Pregnant applicants will be treated the same as non-pregnant women.

Establishing Equal Opportunities in the Workplace

All employers must follow equal opportunities procedures in the workplace. This will help ensure that all workers are treated appropriately and fairly and that no one is treated unfairly because of any protected characteristic. Such procedures will include:

- Ensuring that all similarly qualified employees have equal access and opportunity to all training and advancement facilities. No employee will be overlooked for training or promotion because of any protected characteristic.
- Making reasonable adjustments in the workplace to accommodate disability.
- Ensuring that no employee is paid any more or less than any of their colleagues who are equally qualified, equally experienced and performing the same role.
- Advertising new roles externally as well as internally so that anyone who meets the qualifying criteria gets the opportunity to apply.
- Making sure that no employee is dismissed because of a protected characteristic.
- Ensuring that the same rules apply to employees from all religions regarding extra time off during religious holidays.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will be reviewed annually or in response to incidents or changes in legislation.