Skipton Town Council

Policy Name:	**Equality Policy**
Date of Last Review:	**14 May 2026**
Version Number:	**V1**
Responsible Officer:	**Chief Officer**
File Location:	**Shared drive**
Next Review Due:	**May 2027**
Added to Policy Register:	**YES/NO**

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 This Council is committed to pursuing an equal opportunities approach in the employment of its staff, its relationship with its councillors, and in the way in which services are provided for the public.

1.2 This Council recognises its statutory duties under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy.

1.3 This Council is committed to promoting equal access to services, facilities and equality for all employees or job applicants irrespective of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Race;
- Religion/belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marriage/civil partnership; and
- Pregnancy/maternity

which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and that this is managed in such a way this Council complies with Equal Opportunities legislation and Codes of Practice.

2.0 Links with other Council Policies and Strategies

2.1 The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is one of the most important policies and underpins all other corporate policies, procedures and strategies, therefore providing a strong foundation for Equality of Opportunity in the Council and the services it provides.

3.0 Equality of Opportunity in Service Delivery

3.1 This Council is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and access to its facilities.

3.2 The Council will achieve this by:

- Recognising and accepting that particular individuals or groups are denied equality through direct or indirect discrimination either intentional or unintentional;
- Providing regular training for all Councillors and employees, so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people;
- Delivering services which are relevant, of the highest possible quality and accessible;
- Providing clear information about services and facilities and where necessary making them available in a variety of formats;
- Ensuring that complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective;
- Assessing the impact of and monitoring its services to ensure that they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made;
- Ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.

4.0 Equality of Opportunity in Employment, Training and Organisational Development

4.1 This Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity. All employees will have a part to play in achieving this and the Council will ensure that individuals are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support the Equal Opportunities Policy.

4.2 This policy applies to all employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, volunteers for the Council and all job applicants. This policy has particular relevance to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion.

4.3 No employee or prospective employee should receive unfair or unlawful treatment due to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, and pregnancy/maternity. This Council will seek to identify and act upon unlawful discrimination, which denies individual opportunity on anyone falling within the criteria mentioned above. Employees and applicants have the right to complain about unfair discrimination through the appropriate procedures.

4.4 The Council will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that its recruitment and selection policies and procedures are equitable and fair so that the best people are appointed to deliver its services;
- Only considering applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, skills and abilities unless a genuine occupational qualification exists for specific posts;
- Ensuring that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time, or employed on a temporary basis;
- Ensuring that employment policies and opportunities are of the highest possible quality, therefore equality, equity and consistency are embedded in practices, pay and conditions;
- Making sure that equal consideration is given to people's needs and develop flexible and responsive employment opportunities to tackle those needs;
- Encouraging and supporting employees to reach their full potential within the resources the Council has available to it;
- Taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination and offering support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents; and
- Taking disciplinary action against employees who discriminate against people who work for the Council or who seek employment with the Council.

5.0 Contractors and Suppliers

5.1 This Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all contractors and suppliers carrying out work on behalf of the Council have the appropriate policies and working practices in place to ensure Equality of Opportunity and to comply with the requisite equality legislation and guidance.

5.2 The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- Contractors and providers have employment policies, procedures and practices that do not discriminate; and
- Monitor whether contracts and commissioning arrangements meet these equality commitments.

6.0 Management and Supervision of this Policy

6.1 Council and Committees

Strong leadership is essential to ensure that this policy is embedded at strategic and service delivery levels of the Council. Whilst the Council will be ultimately responsible for implementation of this policy, the Management & Staffing Committee will have responsibility in respect of recruitment, employment and staff performance and management issues.

6.2 Councillors

Councillors have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that the principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process.

6.3 Clerk

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to:

- Ensure that within devolved areas of responsibilities, the standards established within this policy are followed;
- Advise the Council on changing legislative standards as regards this policy.

6.4 Employees

All employees must:

- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunities;
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- Not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- Not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence on discrimination;
- Not harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, gender etc;
- Not pressurise job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying for or taking up a post.

6.5 Breaches of Policy

Any breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Serious offences such as harassment and victimisation may be treated as gross misconduct.

7.0 Complaints

7.1 Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Council's grievance procedure.

7.2 A member of the public or a member of the Council who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Council's complaints policy.

7.3 Existing Employees

Employees wishing to raise a grievance alleging unlawful discrimination during an internal selection procedure should discuss this with the Clerk in the first instance (where possible). An investigation will then be conducted by the Clerk, or an independent person appointed by the Council for the purpose, who will make a recommendation to the Management & Staffing Committee. The employee will receive written notification as to the outcome. An appeal, where appropriate, should be made to the Chairman of the Council's Appeals Panel convened for that purpose.

7.4 Prospective Employees

Any prospective employee wishing to raise a complaint should do so, in writing, to the Clerk within 15 working days, at the latest, of the alleged incident. An investigation will then be conducted by the Clerk, or an independent person appointed for the purpose, who will report to the Personnel Committee.

8.0 Information and Training

8.1 Employees will be provided with appropriate training regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, and pregnancy/maternity.

8.2 The Council will:

- Seek to ensure that all employees are developed by the provision of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities in line with organisational needs;
- Provide training that complies with the Council Equalities Policy;
- Include a copy of the Council's Equalities Policy as part of the induction programme documentation;
- Provide equalities awareness training as part of both its Member and Professional Development Programmes.

9.0 Monitoring Arrangements

9.1 The Council will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

9.2 Committee responsibility for monitoring is detailed in para 6.1 above.

10.0 Alternative Formats

10.1 A copy of this Policy can be made available on larger typeface.

10.2 This document will be posted on the Council's website (***www.skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk***) and copies of this document will be available for inspection and held on deposit in the Council Office.