

1. Our Commitment

Berryfields Parish Council (BPC) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of its work; as an employer, a service provider, and as a representative body for the community.

We aim to ensure that everyone; employees, councillors, volunteers, residents and service users; is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

We value diversity and recognise that varied perspectives, backgrounds and experiences strengthen our organisation and help us serve our community more effectively.

2. Legal Framework

We uphold the principles set out in the Equality Act 2010 and understand that it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly because of any protected characteristic:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, caste, ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise that harassment, victimisation, and failure to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people are unlawful.

3. Promoting Equality and Diversity

We will actively promote equality and diversity in the following ways:

Understand

- Ensure all councillors, employees, and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities under equality law
- Provide appropriate training and guidance.

Apply

- Ensure recruitment, selection, pay, and promotion decisions are based on objective criteria
- Encourage flexible working and make reasonable adjustments for employees and applicants with disabilities
- Ensure equal access to training, development, and progression opportunities.

Consider

- Review policies and practices regularly to ensure they are inclusive and fair
- Consider the equality impact of decisions made by the council
- Provide accessible services and communication for all members of the community.

4. Benefits of Equality and Diversity

Embedding equality and diversity brings clear benefits to our council and community, including:

- Broader perspectives and creativity
- Improved decision making and problem solving
- Better representation of the community
- Higher staff and volunteer engagement and retention
- A positive public reputation
- Increased wellbeing and satisfaction among employees and residents

5. Responsibilities

Promoting equality and diversity is everyone's responsibility.

- **The Council** will ensure that this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed regularly
- **Councillors and staff** must actively promote inclusion and challenge discrimination when they see it
- **Employees** have a duty not to unlawfully discriminate, harass, or victimise others and may be held personally liable if they do so
- **Service users and the public** will be treated with dignity and respect, and the council will take action if harassment or discrimination occurs.

6. Training and Awareness

BPC will provide equality and diversity awareness training for councillors, managers, and employees.

Those involved in recruitment or decision-making will receive additional guidance to ensure fair and inclusive practices.

7. Reporting and Complaints

If an employee or councillor believes they have been discriminated against, harassed, or victimised, they should report it using the Grievance Procedure or Dignity at Work Policy.

All complaints will be taken seriously, investigated promptly, and handled with confidentiality.

No individual will suffer victimisation for raising a genuine concern.

8. Monitoring and Review

BPC will periodically monitor workforce diversity (where appropriate) and review recruitment and employment practices to identify and address any barriers to equality.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes or improvements are identified.

Document History

Approved and adopted	September 2023	(version 1)
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