



Introduction

1. St Albans District Council is an equal opportunity employer and our employment policies are intended to achieve equality of opportunity for all irrespective of ethnic origin, race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, disability, age, trade union activity, marital status, civil partnership status, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity.
2. These policies are also intended to avoid discrimination towards person as a result of their association with another person who has one of the protected characteristics mentioned above (not marital status or civil partnership status) or towards a person as a result of the mistaken perception that they have one of those protected characteristics (not marital status or civil partnership status).
3. The Council will ensure that no requirement or condition will be imposed without justification which could disadvantage any individuals purely on any of the above grounds.
4. Our policy complies with all relevant legislation and codes of practice. This document consolidates the Council's approach to its statutory responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010, other relevant legislation and guidance proffered under any relevant Codes of Practice, regulations and procedures.
5. The Council will ensure that this policy is applied consistently and take steps to monitor its effectiveness and carry out occasional reviews.
6. Any act of discrimination by employees or any failure to comply with the terms of the policy will result in further action being taken as appropriate under the relevant policies e.g. Disciplinary Policy.
7. The Council has a separate policy on the employment and rehabilitation of people who have criminal convictions.

Policy Statement

8. The Council is committed to ensuring the fair and equal treatment of all employees, workers and job applicants.
9. We aim to ensure no-one receives less favourable treatment on any illegal grounds including the characteristics mentioned in paragraph 1 above;

10. There is no discrimination in employment and that decisions on recruitment, promotion, performance management, training and development, and terms and conditions are based solely on job related ability and merit;
11. All Managers and employees accept their responsibilities for good equal opportunities practices and work together towards a positive approach and a culture of fairness and equal treatment for all.
12. That the Council has accepted its social and moral responsibilities, as a public employer in a diverse and multi-racial community, to promote equality of opportunity to ensure social harmony and equitable treatment for all;
13. The Council is committed to meeting its legal responsibilities as an employer under the relevant legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice;
14. We oppose all forms of illegal discrimination, direct or indirect, and aim to eliminate illegal discriminatory practice and promote measures to combat its effects. All complaints of illegal discrimination will be taken most seriously and disciplinary action may be taken against any participant.

Responsibilities

15. The Chief Executive has the general responsibility for the application of this Policy and each service head in turn is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented within each service area. They will deal with any matter arising out of the Policy document or, if necessary, refer it to the Head of Corporate Services or the Chief Executive;
16. The Head of Corporate Services is responsible in conjunction with other relevant service heads for arranging any special advice, instruction or training that may be necessary; for reviewing and the production of any relevant reports and information as required;
17. All employees and workers are required to comply with the policy and to act in accordance with its objectives so as to remove any illegal barriers to equality of opportunity;
18. The Council as an employer will ensure that all managers and employees are trained in their responsibilities regarding equal opportunities;
19. Employees will not themselves or encourage others to practice illegal discrimination, advise management if they suspect that illegal discrimination is taking place and not victimise anyone who makes a complaint or aids a complainant;
20. The Council will fully investigate all complaints of illegal discrimination;
21. The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and identify practices that maybe discriminatory and take any appropriate action as required.

People with disabilities

22. The Council recognises that people with disabilities have a wide range of needs many of which in no way impair their ability to do an excellent job of work but that they may need some special consideration and assistance in or around their work place. In view of this, the Council will continue to adopt a reasonable attitude and policy towards the employment of people with disabilities;
23. The Council will continue to give full and fair consideration to people with disabilities for all types of vacancies, providing that they meet the essential criteria for the posts in question. Job applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria of a post will be invited to the next stage in the selection process (usually an interview) and be considered on their ability;
24. The Council is committed to ensuring that no unreasonable barriers are placed in the way of employees with disabilities who might benefit from in-service training or access to promotion opportunities;
25. Departmental management will ensure that staff are aware of the importance of treating people with disabilities fairly in job or career development opportunities;
26. If an employee becomes disabled, the Council will make every effort to ensure that he/she remains in employment including considering any reasonable practical adjustments to retain their abilities and experience;
27. Where it is reasonably possible within the resources available, the Council will consider making modifications to equipment or the workplace or allow the use of special aids to enable the employment of persons with disabilities. This may involve consultation with Access to Work or similar agencies to obtain advice and funding;
28. The Council has established and will maintain liaison and co-operation with Job Centre Plus, Access to Work and other relevant agencies and partners in the implementation of this Policy.

Recruitment and selection

29. The Council advertises all vacancies externally unless these are held back for the re-deployment of existing staff e.g. those who have become disabled or those threatened by redundancy;
30. The Council will place recruitment advertisements in publications that are reasonably available to all and not unjustifiably confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants from a particular group;
31. The Council will review, as necessary, methods of recruitment to eliminate those that could unfairly exclude any potential candidate from being recruited;
32. The Council will ensure that, where selection tests or requirements are specified, they are valid and relevant to the job and will not lead to indirect discrimination;

33. The Council will ensure that where tests are applied as part of the selection process these apply to all applicants and where relevant that they are in line with the Psychometric and Ability Testing Policy and guidelines;
34. The Council will ensure that recruitment and promotion decisions will be taken on the merits and abilities of the applicants concerned;
35. The Council will ensure that at interview that only questions of direct relevance to the appointment concerning personal circumstances are asked and the same questions are asked of all candidates;
36. The Council will ensure that consideration is given to taking lawful positive action initiatives to achieve and maintain a representative workforce.

Interviewing for Recruitment and Promotion

37. The Policy will be brought to the attention of all Councillors or employees with responsibility for making appointments of whatever kind or level;
38. It is acknowledged that the way in which an interview is conducted may lead to cross cultural misunderstanding and that an incorrect assessment of a candidate's capabilities may result. The Council therefore require that decisions are not based on preconceived notions of the ability of any particular group to perform the duties of the post;
39. Human Resources can advise on selection and recruitment procedures in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy;
40. Specialised training will be provided to all recruiting managers as required from time to time.

Training

41. The Head of Corporate Services in consultation with the Chief Executive and other Heads of Services will arrange training and guidance on the terms and implementation of this policy for all employees and in particular those responsible for making decisions in relation to selection and any other issues covered by this policy;
42. The Council will continue to provide reasonable learning, development and training opportunities for all employees in accordance with its policies. All these opportunities will be planned, delivered and monitored on the basis of equality of access for all, unless there are justifiable reasons for not doing so.

Genuine Occupational Requirements

43. In implementing this policy, the Council acknowledges that certain characteristics such as being male or female may constitute a genuine occupational requirement for specific posts;

Induction

44. Heads of Service will ensure that specific reference to this policy will be included as part of the induction process for new employees.

Conditions of Service

45. The Council will not discriminate in the interpretation of National or Local Terms and Conditions of Service or in the provision of facilities for employees and will ensure that the pay and grading of jobs will be fair and non-discriminatory.

Discipline and Dismissal

46. In matters of discipline and dismissal, the Council will take account of any special needs of employees in terms of communication and comprehension difficulties experienced by them.

Health and Safety

47. The Council will ensure that health and safety requirements are not used unreasonably as grounds for discrimination.

Grievance Procedure

48. The Council has a responsibility to promote harmonious working relationships between employees and any employee who believes he/she has a complaint concerning matters covered by this Policy may pursue it through the Council's Grievance Policy, Dignity at Work Policy or any other relevant policy.

Reviewing the Policy

49. The Council will take such steps as may be reasonably appropriate to assess the effectiveness of this policy;

50. All sensitive data will be collated, stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and all personal information relating to individuals will be treated as confidential and will be used only for monitoring purposes only.

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