St.Helens Council’s Comprehensive Equality Policy (Summary)

The Comprehensive Equality Policy sets out how St.Helens Council meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010

This is a summary of those duties and staff’s responsibilities in meeting them

Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty

The Equality Act 2010 states that the council must:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

What is a Protected Characteristic?

A protected characteristic is a collection of human characteristic, identities or life choices that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 covers the following protected characteristics:
- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Eliminate means to remove completely.

Eliminate does not mean
- Ignore – when we refuse to notice or acknowledge something that is unacceptable
- Tolerate – when we put up with something that is unacceptable
- Impunity – when we allow something unacceptable to go unchallenged

To eliminate is to completely remove from the workplace and from the service delivery

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation undermine a person’s dignity.
Dignity is the wellbeing a person experiences when they feel respected
Respect is a concern for the feeling and wellbeing of other, even when you don’t like them

Discrimination
- Discrimination in its simplest terms means being treated less ‘well’ or unfairly because of one or more protected characteristics
- Discrimination is unacceptable to St.Helens Council and it is our policy to eliminate it whether it occurs in relation to policy, service delivery or employment.

Harassment
- Harassment in simplest terms means being subjected to “unwanted behaviour” because of one or more protected characteristics
- Harassment is a felt thing. It happens when unwanted behaviour creates an environment where a person feels intimidation, hostility, degradation, humiliation or offence.
• A wide range of things can make people feel harassed, including spoken or written words, abuse, images, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a person’s surroundings, or being left out and give the cold shoulder.
• No one comes to work to feel intimidated, threatened, humiliated or offended.
• No one expects to feel intimidated, threatened, humiliated or offended when using a council service.
• Harassment is unacceptable to St. Helens Council and it is our policy to eliminate it whether it occurs in relation to policy, service delivery or employment.

Victimisation
• Victimisation happens when a person stands up for their right not to be harassed or discriminated against, and they are made to suffer for doing so.
• Victimisation is unacceptable to St. Helens Council and it is our policy to eliminate it whether it occurs in relation to policy, service delivery or employment.

Fostering Good Relations within the community
Good relations exist in a community, where people with different protected characteristics
Have a sense of belonging, are valued and appreciated
Have similar life opportunities
Experience strong and positive relationship
• In the workplace
• Within schools and
• Within neighbourhoods

Advancing Equality of Opportunity
In the simplest of terms advancing equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery means
• Equality of access - can I get in?
• Equality of quality – once in, will I be respected as an individual?
• Equality of outcomes - will decision about me be based on merit?

Equality of opportunity does not necessarily mean that all individuals should or can be treated the same. It may be necessary for some individuals to receive more assistance than others in order that they may achieve an equal level of service or opportunity.

Staff Responsibilities
• All staff must follow the Council’s Comprehensive Equality Policy.
• Staff must conduct themselves without discrimination, harassment or victimisation when at work.
• This means treating all people fairly and with a respect for their personal dignity.
• Staff must attend appropriate equality training.
• If you know or suspect that discrimination, harassment or victimisation is happening then you must tell your line manager.

For more information about the Comprehensive Equality Policy Webpages
https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/council/equal-opportunities/
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E-mail: SimonCousins@sthelens.gov.uk