

SHOCKLACH OVIATT AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council is committed to celebrating diversity and promoting equality in everything we do, to improve the quality of life for everyone living, working and visiting the Farndon area.

1. AIMS

Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council respects and values differences and recognises the importance of setting out a clear commitment to promoting fairness and tackling discrimination. The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council, its Members and Officers to meeting the Public-Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011.

The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to develop policies, better represent their interests and provide services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.

This Policy formally sets out Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity irrespective of the following nine protected characteristics identified as part of the Equality Act 2010:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy, maternity or paternity
- Having or not having dependents
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race [including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins]
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Diversity is about understanding, recognising, respecting and valuing differences.

2.2 Equality is about managing differences so that everyone has equality of opportunity through a fair and consistent approach to the application of rules and policies. We recognise

that sometimes this will mean treating people differently.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) places a general duty on the Council and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

As such:

3.1 It is Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Councils policy to provide equality of access, information, facilities and services and to meet its obligations as an employer irrespective of any of the above factors.

3.2 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All people and employees will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. All decisions on membership, selection for office, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination, based on aptitude and ability.

3.3 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council recognises that supporting Equality is of primary importance. This policy will help all those who are Council Members or work for the Council to develop sound and effective policies that impact on the village, community and surrounding areas.

3.4 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council values the diversity of the local population. We want our services, facilities and resources to be accessible and useful to every parishioner regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, religious belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or any other individual characteristic which may unfairly affect a person's opportunities in this regard.

3.5 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council aims to create a culture that respects and values differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity. We aim to remove barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to the community to develop a culture that positively values diversity.

3.6 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council will challenge discrimination. It aims to provide equality and fairness to all in the community and expects all Members and Officers to be aware and understand the Equality Act 2010.

4. EQUALITY COMMITMENTS

4.1 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council:

- Promotes equality of opportunity for all persons connected in any way with this Council.
- Promotes a good and harmonious learning and working environment in which all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated.
- Prevents occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Fulfils all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Complies with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.
- Takes lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate.
- Regards breaches of our equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to termination.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 All members acknowledge his/her responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and for creating the equality environment. Members will:

- Approved the policy by a resolution of the full council and reviewed/amended at least annually each year at the Council's Annual or First meeting held in May.
- Ensure this policy is widely communicated and made available on the Council's website.
- Ensure, by appropriate training where necessary, that they do not consciously or unconsciously discriminate in the recruitment of applicants for Council membership or engagement with it.
- Incorporate the equal opportunities practices into the work of the Council including decision making.
- Ensure that those bodies and organisations the Council works have a current equal opportunities and diversity policy and will incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications and tenders.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 The Council will monitor the effective implementation of its equal opportunities policy by reviewing its performance annually, and actions taken as necessary.

7. COMPLAINTS

7.1 Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by staff, councillors, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the Council's activities.

7.2 All staff and councillors should understand they can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment.

7.3 Any complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure.

7.4 In addition to the Council's complaints procedure, any person has the right to pursue complaints of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

*Adopted 13 May 2026