



Equal Opportunities Policy

This document can be made available in standard and large sized print and on tape

1. Introduction

1.1 The policy sets out Falmouth Town Council's wish to ensure respect for individual human dignity, for fairness and for justice. Falmouth Town Council considers that it has a responsibility to make sure that there is no discrimination in its delivery of Services or in Employment.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 The staff of Falmouth Town Council recognise that they have a responsibility to the whole community within the Falmouth area; residents, employees and visitors alike; for making sure that all services and employment opportunities are equally accessible to all.

2.2 Falmouth Town Council is committed to ensuring that the services it provides and the job opportunities, training and development it offers are equally accessible to all members of the local community.

2.3 Falmouth Town Council will not tolerate discrimination against its service users, employees or job applicants on the grounds of gender, disability, race, marital status, sexual orientation, age or any other unjustifiable reason. Discrimination and harassment of all forms are unacceptable behaviour.

2.4 Falmouth Town Council will take prompt and effective action to deal with discrimination whenever it may occur and will monitor and review its equal opportunities policy and codes of practice regularly and comprehensively to make them effective.

2.5 Falmouth Town Council is committed to adherence to the Equal Opportunities Commission's "*Guidelines for Equal Opportunities Employers*", the Commission for Racial Equality's "*Code of Practice for the elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity in Employment*".

2.6 Falmouth Town Council will use the procedures in the Commission for Racial Equality's document '*Race Equality means Quality*' as a standard against which to measure equal opportunities in service delivery.

2.7 Falmouth Town Council hereby adopts the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice on Employment.

3. Falmouth Town Council's General Aims

In dealing with any service delivery or employment issue we will do our best to ensure that:

3.1 Our service users, customers, Members, and employees are made aware of the contents of the Equal Opportunities Policy and how it applies to them.

3.2 We will monitor the implementation of the policy to make sure that it is effective and if we fail we will do all we can to put matters right.

3.3 We will monitor the implementation of any actions to be undertaken to make sure that our deadlines are met. We review the policy from time to time and seek to improve it where possible.

3.4 We will consult with customers, service users, local interest groups, societies and our employees and their trade unions about the implementation of our policy, any changes to the policy and actions we propose to take under the policy.

3.5 All contractors and external agencies working for or in partnership with us should meet the standards of our Equal Opportunities Policies in the services they deliver to us.

3.6 We promote good practice in Equal Opportunities whilst drawing on best practice from others.

4. Service Delivery Aims

4.1 When delivering our services we will do our best to ensure that:

i) All services are provided in ways which ensure that our service users and customers are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

ii) Everyone who uses Falmouth Town Council's services is aware of their right to receive equal treatment in all dealings with Falmouth Town Council.

5. Employment Aims

5.1 When recruiting, training or employing staff we will aim to ensure that :

- i) All applicants for jobs or work placements with Falmouth Town Council are treated fairly and equally in accordance with the policy.
- ii) All employees are selected by fair and equal recruitment procedures.
- iii) All employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- vi) All employees are required to implement the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- v) All contractors and external agencies working for or in partnership with us should meet the standards of our policy at a level and in a manner appropriate to their job.
- vi) All applicants, employees and work placements will have access to Falmouth Town Council's complaints procedure in the event of any alleged breach of the policy.

6. Equal Opportunities Training

6.1 Falmouth Town Council will give new employees and work placements information on equal opportunities during their induction training, including explanations of their rights and their obligations under the Equal Opportunities Policy. It will also make available this document and inform new employees and work placements of its existence.

7. Recruitment and Employment

7.1 Recruitment

Falmouth Town Council will ensure that :-

- i) It is made clear in all job advertisements, work placement packs, recruitment literature and artist's contracts, both internal and external, that Falmouth Town Council is an "*Equal Opportunities Employer*".
- ii) Job advertisements are placed in publications that are readily available.
- iii) Applicants with a disability who meet the person specification for any job vacancy will be considered fairly and fully on their abilities.

iv) Where tests or requirements are specified they correspond with the requirements of the job and will not lead to indirect discrimination.

v) Where standard tests are used, they apply to all applicants equally.

vi) The criteria set out in a person specification apply equally throughout the recruitment process and that applicants are not rejected because of non essential criteria which may deter some applicants from continuing with an application.

vii) All officers and Town Councillors involved in the recruitment and selection process are aware of Falmouth Town Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and abide by legislation set out in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and in all personnel procedures covered by the Equal Opportunities Policy.

viii) All applicants are aware of the Equal Opportunities Policy, of their right to equality of treatment, and of how to register a complaint when they believe they have been unfairly treated.

7.2 Age limits and domestic circumstances

Age limits will not be imposed during the recruitment process unless they are an essential requirement of the post. Falmouth Town Council does not enquire at interview about marital status and family responsibilities. Where such information is disclosed, it will not affect a candidate's chance of success.

7.3 Promotion, transfer and career development

The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy Code of Practice applies equally to internal and external applicants.

8 .Employment

8.1 People with disabilities

i) Falmouth Town Council will ensure that people with disabilities have equal treatment in respect of training, career development and promotion and will encourage them to develop their potential.

ii) Falmouth Town Council supports the following principles for the employment of disabled people.

iii) Employees who become disabled whilst they are in post will be kept in employment with Falmouth Town Council if it is feasible using training,

rehabilitation and/or redeployment and taking account of the employment opportunities the Town Council is able to offer.

iv) Where appropriate, modifications to equipment, employment aids or job restructuring will be provided.

v) Adaptation of premises will be considered, where possible.

vi) Disabled employees, workplacement candidates, artists exhibiting at Falmouth Art Gallery and contractors (eg. freelance educators in Falmouth Art Gallery) will be asked whether the arrangements made for them are suitable and whether other options could be more comfortable or effective.

8.2 Cultural and Religious needs

Where employees have cultural or religious needs (eg dress) which may conflict with existing job requirements, Falmouth Town Council will consider varying or adapting those requirements if at all possible.

8.3 Dignity in the workplace

The Town Council recognises that all its employees and service users are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Both discrimination and harassment are viewed as serious disciplinary matters.

9. Discrimination

9.1 Direct discrimination means the less favourable treatment of someone on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, disability or age.

9.2 Segregating any person from another on racial grounds is also direct discrimination.

9.3 Indirect discrimination means applying a requirement or condition which adversely affects one group of people more than another where the condition cannot be justified on non-discriminatory grounds e.g. imposing working hours which effectively prevent single parents from working.

9.4 Falmouth Town Council employees and workplacement candidates have a responsibility not to discriminate. Any job description will state that each employee shall implement the Equal Opportunities Policy in a manner appropriate to their job. This means that all Falmouth Town Council employees must, in so far as they can:

i) Treat all service users and co-workers equally and without discrimination.

ii) Ensure that Falmouth Town Council's services are provided to all service users fairly and equitably.

iii) Not discriminate in matters of selection, recruitment, promotion, transfer or training.

iv) Not victimise employees who have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.

v) Tell a senior officer or chair of the staffing committee immediately of any discrimination the employee may be aware of.

10. Harassment

10.1 Harassment is unacceptable to Falmouth Town Council. Harassment means, amongst other things, "unreciprocated comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact, that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an employee's job security or create an intimidating working environment."

10.2 Complaints will be made on the basis of complete confidentiality.

11. Monitoring and Review of the Equal Opportunity Policy

11.1 The Equal Opportunities Policy will be made available on tape and in large print on request. When possible, translations will be provided on request.

11.2 Falmouth Town Council will endeavour to treat all Service Users equally and will not refuse service or provide service of a worse standard or in a worse manner to anyone for any reason.

11.3 Equal Access to Premises and Service Delivery

i) Falmouth Town Council will undertake an audit of access and will then plan a programme for improving access to all the Council's services.

11.4 The Council will :-

i) Measure how the service is used by one or more of the following groups:

- a) women
- b) ethnic minority communities
- c) people with disabilities

- ii) Continuously look to improve the equality of service provision to service users.
- iii) Objectively assess cases of grievance arising out of the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- iv) Inform the process of modifying the Policy, codes of practice and action plans in line with revisions to legislation and/or best practice.
- v) Provide information to show the level of Falmouth Town Council's compliance.
- vi) Form a local access group from potential service users and bodies with particular interest in equal access.

This policy was passed by Falmouth Town Council on 4th February 2008

