



SEDEBROOK PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY – 16 FEBRUARY 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Sedgebrook Parish Council is committed to achieving equal opportunities in the services it provides. No officer, member, volunteer or visitor should receive less favourable treatment because of: sex, colour, ethnic origin, age, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and/or marital status.
- 1.2. As a provider of a service to the community, Sedgebrook Parish Council accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.
- 1.3. It is the responsibility of all officers, members, volunteers and service users to ensure that no other person receives less favourable treatment than any other.
- 1.4. Sedgebrook Parish Council recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with this Equal Opportunities Policy. Sedgebrook Parish Council will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed person(s).
- 1.5. Sedgebrook Parish Council will review this policy as required.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1. Sedgebrook Parish Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all officers, members, volunteers or visitors have a duty as part of their involvement with the Parish Council to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.
- 2.2. Sedgebrook Parish Council will bring to the attention of all officers, members and volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.
- 2.3. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of this Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working volunteers.
- 2.4. Every effort will be made to ensure that the services offered reflect the composition of the community it serves. Sedgebrook Parish Council is committed to encouraging access from under-represented groups.

- 2.5. If any officer, member, volunteer or visitor feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the Parish Council.
- 2.6. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.
- 2.7. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

3. Disabled Access

- 3.1. Sedgebrook Parish Council will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

4. Use of Language

- 4.1. Officers, members, volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, may belittle:
 - disabled groups;
 - individuals with special needs;
 - any race, culture or religion;
 - a person's sexual orientation;
 - women and/or men.
- 4.2. Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.
- 4.3. All materials used or developed Sedgebrook Parish Council will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and any which are considered to be potentially discriminatory will not be used.

5. Sexual Harassment

- 5.1. No officer, member, volunteer or visitor should be subject to sexual harassment. This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:
 - verbal sexual abuse;
 - physical contact;
 - repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive.
- 5.2. If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the officer, member, volunteer or visitor who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

6. Equal Opportunities Monitoring

- 6.1. The Parish Council will monitor its equal opportunities progress, development and practice.

This policy was adopted by Sedgebrook Parish Council Meeting on the 16 February 2017

The policy was reviewed on the 24 February 2022, 9 February 2023, 14 March 2024 and 22 May 2025.