



TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Approved by Todmorden Town Council on:

Next Review Due: September 2027

1. Introduction

Todmorden Town Council is committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all. We believe that embracing diversity, advancing equity, and ensuring inclusion enriches our community and strengthens our work as a local authority.

The Council is bound by the **Equality Act 2010**, which consolidates and updates previous anti-discrimination laws. The Act protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a more equal society. It identifies the following **protected characteristics**:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Act also introduced a **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**, which applies to all public bodies, including town and parish councils.

2. Our Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010, Todmorden Town Council must have *due regard* to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between diverse groups within the community.

This means considering equality impacts in our decision-making, service delivery, partnerships, and employment practices.

3. Policy Commitment

Todmorden Town Council will:

- Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of its work and interactions.
- Create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that respects individual differences and human rights.
- Encourage representation from underrepresented groups across the Council's structures and committees.
- Embed EDI principles into our policies, recruitment, services, and public engagement.
- Work to eliminate all forms of discrimination, bias, harassment, and victimisation.

We believe in **equity**, not just equality – ensuring fair access to opportunities by addressing structural barriers and recognising lived experience.

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All Council staff, councillors, volunteers, contractors, service users, and visitors.
- Every aspect of Council activity, including governance, employment, procurement, public service delivery, communications, and community engagement.

5. Understanding Protected Characteristics

The Council will take proactive steps to ensure dignity, respect, and fair treatment for all, in particular those with protected characteristics:

• **Age**

We promote intergenerational fairness and challenge stereotypes affecting both younger and older residents and employees. We ensure age is not a barrier to opportunity, services, or participation.

• **Disability**

We recognise both visible and non-visible disabilities and make **reasonable adjustments** to remove barriers. Accessibility is fundamental—this includes physical spaces, information formats, digital access, and communication.

• **Gender Reassignment**

We respect and affirm all gender identities and expressions, including non-binary identities. We support employees and residents during any stage of transition and ensure inclusive language and facilities.

• **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

We treat all legal unions with equal dignity, ensuring fair treatment regardless of marital or partnership status.

- ***Pregnancy and Maternity***

We support parents and caregivers through flexible working, inclusive language, and protection against discrimination during pregnancy and parental leave.

- ***Race and Ethnicity***

We celebrate racial and cultural diversity. We challenge racism, xenophobia, and structural inequality wherever they occur and commit to anti-racist practices in our leadership and services.

- ***Religion or Belief***

We accommodate religious practices and beliefs, where practicable, and foster interfaith understanding. We also respect those with no religious belief, or with ethical beliefs.

- ***Sex***

We strive for gender equality across pay, leadership, services, and representation. We are committed to addressing the gender pay gap and ensuring gender-sensitive decision-making.

- ***Sexual Orientation***

We affirm all sexual orientations and create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals. Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia have no place in our Council or community.

6. Intersectionality & Additional Considerations

We recognise that individuals may face overlapping forms of discrimination (e.g. a disabled person from an ethnic minority background). We also take into account:

- Socioeconomic disadvantage
- Rural isolation
- Caring responsibilities
- Military service background
- Gender identity and expression
- Ex-offender status (with risk assessments as appropriate)

7. Objectives & Actions

We will:

- Embed EDI into all policies, procedures, and services.
- Provide inclusive and accessible Council meetings and communications.
- Promote positive representation and participation across all community groups.
- Support training and development on EDI for councillors, staff, and volunteers.
- Collect and analyse diversity data (where appropriate and anonymised) to improve services.
- Work with local partners and community groups to reduce inequality and tackle discrimination.

8. Responsibilities

- **Councillors and staff** are individually responsible for supporting inclusive behaviour and practices.
- **The Town Clerk** is accountable for ensuring the policy is implemented and embedded across Council operations.
- **All contractors, suppliers, grant recipients and partner organisations** are expected to uphold the principles of this policy.

Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, and unlawful conduct may lead to legal proceedings.

9. Recruitment And Employment

We are an **equal opportunities employer**. Our recruitment and employment practices will:

- Be based on merit and free from bias or discrimination.
- Use inclusive and accessible advertising, application processes, and interview procedures.
- Avoid unnecessary barriers such as age limits, jargon, or exclusive language.
- Provide flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

We welcome applications from all backgrounds and lived experiences, especially underrepresented groups.

10. Monitoring, Review & Accountability

- This policy will be reviewed:
- Every **two years**, or
- Sooner if legislation or best practice changes.

Performance will be monitored through staff and councillor training, policy audits, and community feedback.

11. References

- **Equality Act 2010** – UK legislation
- **Public Sector Equality Duty** – Section 149, Equality Act 2010
- **NALC (National Association of Local Councils)** guidance on equality
- **Local Government Association**: EDI frameworks and toolkits

Contact for queries: Town Clerk – townclerk@todmorden-tc.gov.uk