

Equality Policy

1. Our commitment

1.1 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to providing a high quality service to all the communities of North Yorkshire and the City of York. In doing so we fully consider individual needs, and ensure equality of opportunity in employment, preventing discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, or any other reason which can not be shown to be justified.

1.2 This policy is intended to assist us in putting this commitment into practice, as such we will strive to ensure that in the services we deliver to our communities and in the work environment everyone is treated with dignity and respect and we will consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of our decision making process; those aims are to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2. The law

2.2 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

2.3 Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

2.4 Employees should not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods (e.g. fitting smoke alarms). It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services.

3. Complaints and Grievances

3.1 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority has a complaints policy and procedure on the internet for members of the public to report any complaints and their is a grievance

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procedure and a harassment and bullying in the workplace policy and procedure for employees, these documents can be obtained by clicking on the links below:

- [complaints procedure](#)
- [grievance procedure](#)
- [harassment and bullying in the workplace policy](#)

3.2 All complaints, grievances will be taken seriously and the issue investigated in accordance with the policy and procedure.

3.3 An employee will not be penalised for raising a grievance or complaint of harassment and bullying even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint or grievance is both untrue and made in bad faith.

4. Service Users, suppliers and other people not employed by the organisation

4.1 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority will not discriminate unlawfully against the public using or seeking to use, facilities or services provided.

4.2 Employees should report any harassment or bullying by members of the public, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

5. Recruitment

5.1 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will consider the use of positive action initiative before the recruitment process begins to try to become more representative of the communities we serve and to change the diversity of the current workforce

6.0 Training

6.1 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority will provide training in equality issues, through the induction process and ongoing training cycle, to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work in the Authority, to help them understand their responsibilities and rights under the Equality Act and Authority policies and what they can do to help create a working environment free of harassment and bullying. Additional training will also be provided to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints from the public and employees.

7.0 Employer responsibilities

Core values have been developed to support how we will deliver our services to our communities. The health and safety of our staff is a core element of how we deliver an effective service to the community. We will train and equip all staff to enable them to deliver high quality service that our communities expect. As an employer the service has a responsibility to develop the service to make it more inclusive and representative to our service users. We will develop service awareness and knowledge towards equality, diversity and work to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

Comment [A1]: Add link to core values as not present in any other policy

8.0 Employees responsibilities

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8.1 Every employee is required to assist the Authority to meet its commitment to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations both in service delivery and in employment. All employees are required to comply with the core values of the Authority along with the [code of conduct](#), to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

8.2 Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Authority for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

8.3 Acts or allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against members of the public or employees are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Authority's discipline and grievance procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

9.0 Monitoring and review

9.1 This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. Where opportunities exist for peer review we will consider entering into such an arrangement

This will include: -

- how our services are delivered
- how we engage with stakeholders and consider needs
- the protected characteristics of the existing workforce
- the protected characteristics of applicants for jobs/training(including promotion),
- exit interviews to provide reports on reasons for leavers from the service.
- complaints/grievances

9.2 We will also consider the impact of any changes to how our services are delivered and how these actions may affect the public in general and in particular those with protected characteristics.

9.3 Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Linked policy/strategy

Workforce Strategy (replaces People Strategy)

Equality and Diversity Policy

Inclusion Statement

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Bullying and harassment Policy

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Inclusion Statement

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue service strive to improve on the service we provide to the communities we serve in North Yorkshire and the City of York.

We are committed to promoting equality and inclusion in the services we offer to the community and to our employees. We are committed to encouraging equality and Inclusion amongst our workforce and to eliminating unlawful discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics.

Equality and Inclusion covers all aspects of the work we do, from developing policies to how we engage with the communities we serve.

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