

Okehampton Youth Council Equal Opportunities Policy



Policy Statement

Membership of Okehampton Youth Council (OYC) is open to any young people between the ages of 10 and 18 who live, work or attend school or college within the town boundary regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or ability. (The boundary includes the area to the east of the town that will become part of the Town as approved by West Devon Borough Council following the Community Governance Boundary Review.)

OYC is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among the group, and to eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our group to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each member to feel respected and able to give their best.

OYC, in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of the public, or other organisations.

The purpose of the policy is to:

Provide equality, fairness and respect for all members of the group, and to not unlawfully discriminate – in line with the Equality Act 2010, on the grounds of any protected characteristics - namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in benefits, terms and conditions of volunteering, dealing with grievances and discipline, or on any other grounds.

Meetings and Events

- OYC meetings are held in accessible venues, with disabled access, nearby parking and some transport links.
- OYC events will be advertised in variety of ways to ensure that young people know about them, including email, posters, social media and word of mouth.
- Information will be circulated to a wide range of young people, including the Multicultural Network Devon Network, Special Schools, Disability Groups, LGBTQ+ Groups.
- OYC will not tolerate any form of abusive language or bullying and will take active steps to promote positive interactions amongst all young people.

Recruiting Youth Councillors and Young People to attend events

- OYC publicity will reflect a wide range of young people from various backgrounds and abilities.
- OYC members will be offered regular training around peer mediation, victim support and equality issues.
- OYC members and adults will actively challenge any incident of bullying, name calling, harassment and report any incident witnessed to the appropriate authority.

Code of Conduct

- All people will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, and will be free from harassment, abuse or intimidation on any of these issues.
- At all times people's feelings will be valued and respected. Language or humour that people may find offensive will not be used, including for example, racist, sexist or homophobic jokes or language which is derogatory.
- Any incidents breaking the above conditions will be taken seriously and if they cannot be resolved by way of an acceptable apology and written undertaking that such an offence will not be repeated, then the following action will be taken:
 - (i) The member will be suspended from OYC until such time as the Council feels the victim has received support and will not feel further threatened, and the incident will not be repeated. This could mean permanent exclusion from membership.
 - (ii) Should the victim of the incident request it, the offending member may be reported to the appropriate authority.

Supporting Agencies for Assistance and Advice on Reporting

- Town Clerk
Okehampton Town Council
Town Hall
Okehampton EX20 1AA

01837 53179
townclerk@okehampton.gov.uk
- Devon and Cornwall Police
call 101 – or 112/999 in an emergency.
- Plymouth and Devon Race Equality Council – 01752 224555