**Equalities Policy**

1. **Aims**
	1. We aim to:
		1. promote equality of opportunity for all;
		2. ensure that no individual is unlawfully or unfairly discriminated against in the planning and delivery of any of our activities;
		3. ensure that the values of equality, diversity and respect for all are embedded in everything we do.
2. **Scope**
	1. This policy applies to members, employees, job applicants, volunteers, Management Committee members, Trustees, contractors and suppliers so that they will not be treated unlawfully or unfairly on any of the following grounds, singly or in combination, directly or indirectly:
		* race, colour, nationality, or national or ethnic origins;
		* gender or sexual orientation;
		* religious or political beliefs except if they contravene this policy;
		* age, marital or family status, responsibility for dependents or homeless status;
		* appearance or physical characteristics;
		* employment status or trade union activities;
		* disability including physical or learning disabilities, state of health;
		* unrelated criminal convictions.

1. **Areas of Relevance**

Members

* 1. We aim to ensure that:
		1. all applicants for membership are given information about relevant services and how we can support them;
		2. our members are aware of and support this policy;
		3. barriers to access to our services are removed;
		4. any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment in words or actions by members, staff or volunteers is not tolerated;
		5. we support people to develop equalities awareness and understanding, recognising that many people are unfamiliar with the ways in which discrimination and disadvantage affect people’s health, well-being and quality of life.

Service

* 1. We aim to ensure that:
		1. all aspects of service provision including advice, education, promotions and campaigns are positive, inclusive and non-discriminatory;
		2. we use plain English in our communications and publish in accessible formats;
		3. we use accessible venues for events and meetings where possible;
		4. we provide a secure environment in events and meetings in which all contributions are considered and valued;
		5. we reflect a wide range of communities in our choice of resources, avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images;
		6. we recognise that children, the disabled, families and carers come from diverse backgrounds and family structures, and that this may affect the well-being of children and may impact on their learning and attainment;
		7. we identify service priorities and needs reflected by children and the disabled community at large;
		8. we promote the integration of disabled people into society.

Staff, Volunteers and Management Committee members

* 1. We aim to ensure that:

Recruitment

* + 1. our employment procedures accord with legislation and best practice, so that applicants for jobs and volunteer positions, including Trustees and Management Committee members, are treated fairly and on the basis of merit, using open selection criteria to assess their abilities and experience;
		2. no applicant is placed at a disadvantage by the requirements or conditions of employment (except where it is relevant and permitted to do so);
		3. provision for disabled access, employment support and flexible hours will be arranged wherever possible;
		4. no assumptions are made about an applicant’s personal and domestic circumstances or plans;
		5. disabled applicants will be guaranteed an interview if they fulfil the criteria for the post;
		6. we monitor the recruitment process and keep it under review;

Employment

* + 1. all employees and volunteers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, are treated fairly and with respect;
		2. we create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and volunteers are recognised and valued;
		3. every employee and volunteer has a working environment that promotes dignity and respect;
		4. no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated;

 Training and Development

* + 1. training, development and progression opportunities available to all staff;
		2. selection for employment, volunteering, promotion, training or any other benefit is on the basis of aptitude and ability;
		3. all employees and volunteers are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential;
		4. the talents and resources of the workforce are fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Contractors and Suppliers

* 1. We aim to ensure that:
		1. companies and suppliers who provide our products and services demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities for their staff;
		2. we act fairly and without discrimination when selecting companies for tendering and when awarding contracts.
1. **Procedure**
	1. We aim to ensure that:
		1. we comply with all relevant legislation and will make available information on specific compliance to any member who reasonably requests it;
		2. we collect information and maintain records on the implementation of this policy, ensuring that personal information is kept confidential and that information on disability and ethnic origin is as provided by the individual concerned;
		3. all members, employees and volunteers are aware of this policy; it is given adequate publicity in the shop units, and is included on our website;
		4. all Trustees who are members of interview panels have received induction in equalities;
		5. breaches of this procedure will be regarded as misconduct (staff) or anti-social behaviour (volunteers and members) and dealt with speedily in accordance with the appropriate procedure as agreed by the Management Committee members.
2. **Monitoring and Review**
	1. A designated Management Committee member is responsible for monitoring complaints and for reporting with recommendations as equalities issues arise and at least annually.
	2. The Management Committee will, periodically, review the adequacy of this policy and of its implementation, including an assessment of any significant new or revised legislation, policies and best practice which impact on equality.
3. **Responsibilities**
	1. The Management Committee is responsible for:
		1. establishing and updating this policy, for its implementation and for maintaining appropriate records;
		2. enabling this policy to be subject to agreement with any trade union which staff choose to join or to which they belong;
		3. using reasonable endeavours to ensure that every member, employee, volunteer and Management Committee member is responsible for adhering to the policy as it affects the Charity’s operation and services.
4. **Relevant Legislation**
	* 1. Equality Act 2010
		2. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 amended 2005
5. **Definitions**
	1. The term **‘Equality and Diversity’** relates to readdressing inequalities and ensuring that employment and services are accessible to all.
	2. **Discrimination** occurs when someone is treated worse (or in legal terms ‘less favourably’) than another person in the same situation.
	3. Illegal discrimination takes three forms:
		1. **Direct discrimination** – treating a person less favourably than another, for example by not offering them a job because of their sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin or disability.
		2. **Indirect discrimination** – application of a requirement or condition, which adversely affects one group more than another and cannot be justified. Examples may include; applying for a height requirement which may disproportionately affect women and some ethnic groups, or rigidly insisting on certain educational qualifications which may not be essential to the performance of the job.
		3. **Victimisation** – treating a person less favourably because the person has made a complaint or acted as a witness in cases of discrimination under any of these acts.
	4. **Equality** means every person has equal Human Rights and therefore employment and services should be accessible to all.
	5. **Diversity** is about recognition and valuing of difference in its broadest sense. Everyone is different and diversity is about creating a working culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation and the individual.

**Related Documents**

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Employment Policy

Membership Conditions

Privacy and Data Protection Policy

Volunteer Policy

Code of Conduct for Management Committee Members

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

**Adopted:**

**Review:**

**Date of Next Review:**