



WEALDEN VOLUNTEERING

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Charity number: 1206210

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date: JULY 2024

Review By: JULY 2026

Chair signature:

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Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

Wealden volunteering is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for our workforce (which includes all staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors and agents) to be truly representative of all sections of society and our service users, and for everyone to feel respected and able to give their best.

Wealden volunteering is also committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the wider community. The aim is for all to have equal access to services and to feel welcome and included.

This policy applies to:

1. All of our workforce, including staff (whether temporary, part-time, or full-time), volunteers, trustees, contractors and agents. Note: where the term workforce is used in this document, it includes all of these groups
2. Our dealings with members, service users, other organisations, and the general public.

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all of our workforce and our service users
2. Not unlawfully discriminate with regards to the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage or civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - pay and benefits
 - terms and conditions of employment or volunteering
 - dealing with grievances and discipline
 - dismissal
 - redundancy
 - leave for parents
 - requests for flexible working
 - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

Our commitments

The organisation commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense

2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and the workforce about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include everyone conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in volunteering and employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All of the workforce should understand they, as well as Wealden Volunteering, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their work, against fellow team members, service users, suppliers and the public.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow team members, service users, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all of the workforce, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

5. Make decisions concerning team members being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

6. Review volunteering and employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and any associated policies to take account of changes in the law.

7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

8. Consider equality, diversity, and inclusion in the design and delivery of all services. Where feasible, services should be designed so that they are inclusive by default. Wealden Volunteering will be proactive in identifying communities and groups that are not well served by our existing services or the services provided by other local organisations. Where such communities or groups are identified, Wealden Volunteering will work to improve access and opportunity for those groups. This may be by adapting the existing service, providing a targeted service for this group, or working with others to encourage and help them to adapt or provide services for this group.

Agreement to follow this policy

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by trustees and management and has been agreed with staff and volunteer representatives.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in our Disciplinary policy on our website. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.