



Wealden Volunteering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Approved by the Board: July 2026

Next Review date: July 2028

Chair Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul P. K.', is written on a light yellow rectangular background.

1. Purpose

Wealden Volunteering (WV) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of our work.

We aim to:

- Ensure fair access to volunteering opportunities and services
- Create an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected, valued and able to contribute
- Reduce barriers to participation, particularly in rural communities

This policy supports our organisational outcomes of inclusive, connected communities and improved wellbeing.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Staff (paid, temporary, part-time, full-time)
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Contractors and partners

It also applies to:

- Service users and beneficiaries
- Partner organisations
- Members of the public

3. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Equality Act 2010 (protected characteristics and discrimination law)
- Public sector equality principles (as good practice)
- Charity Commission guidance on equality, inclusion and public benefit

4. Protected Characteristics

We will not unlawfully discriminate in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

5. Our Commitments

Wealden Volunteering commits to:

5.1 Inclusive Environment

- Creating a culture free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation
- Promoting dignity, respect and inclusion for all
- Taking a **zero-tolerance approach** to unacceptable behaviour

5.2 Equal Access to Services

- Ensuring services are accessible and inclusive
- Identifying and reducing barriers (e.g. rural isolation, digital exclusion, disability)
- Proactively reaching underrepresented groups

5.3 Fair Recruitment and Engagement

- Making decisions based on merit and fairness
- Providing equal access to volunteering, employment and development opportunities

- Ensuring inclusive recruitment practices

5.4 Training and Awareness

- Providing EDI training and guidance to staff and volunteers
- Ensuring understanding of rights and responsibilities

5.5 Tackling Discrimination and Harassment

We take all complaints of discrimination seriously, including those from:

- Staff, volunteers and trustees
- Service users and members of the public

Such behaviour may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Removal from volunteering
- Termination of contracts

Serious cases may also involve legal or criminal processes.

6. Intersection with Other Policies

Safeguarding

EDI is integral to safeguarding.

We recognise that discrimination and exclusion can increase vulnerability.

Concerns relating to harm or abuse will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy.

Complaints

Concerns about discrimination or unfair treatment can be raised through the Complaints Policy, which ensures fair investigation and resolution.

Data Protection

Equality monitoring data will be:

- Collected lawfully and transparently

- Used only for improving inclusivity
- Stored securely in line with data protection requirements

7. Accessibility and Inclusion in Practice

We will:

- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- Provide accessible formats where possible
- Offer flexible ways to engage where possible (e.g. remote and in-person options)
- Consider inclusion in all service design and delivery

This ensures services are inclusive by default, not retrofitted.

Reasonable Adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce barriers for disabled people and others who may require additional support.

Requesting Adjustments:

Individuals (staff, volunteers, service users, or applicants) can request reasonable adjustments by:

- Speaking to a member of staff or their line manager
- Contacting WV via email, phone, or through the website
- Requesting support at the point of application or service access

Requests can be made at any stage and do not need to be formal.

Assessment and Decision-Making:

- Requests will be considered by the CEO or a designated senior member of staff
- Where appropriate, adjustments will be discussed with the individual to understand their needs
- Decisions will consider practicality, effectiveness, cost, and the impact on services
- External advice (e.g. specialists or partners) may be sought where needed

Response Times:

WV will aim to respond to requests promptly and implement agreed adjustments as quickly as possible.

Examples of Adjustments May Include:

- Flexible volunteering or working arrangements
- Accessible formats (large print, easy read, digital formats)
- Physical accessibility arrangements
- Additional support or communication methods
- Adjustments to recruitment or onboarding processes

Review of Adjustments:

Adjustments will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain appropriate.

8. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

We will:

- Monitor diversity data where appropriate and lawful
- Assess whether services are reaching all communities
- Review barriers to participation
- Use feedback and data to improve services

Monitoring will be proportionate and compliant with data protection requirements.

9. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

- Provide oversight and accountability
- Ensure EDI is embedded in governance and strategy

CEO and Management

- Lead implementation of this policy
- Promote inclusive culture and practice
- Ensure reasonable adjustment requests are managed consistently, fairly, and in a timely manner
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Staff and Volunteers

- Treat others with dignity and respect

- Challenge inappropriate behaviour
- Follow this policy and related procedures

10. Reporting Concerns

Individuals are encouraged to raise concerns about discrimination or exclusion.

Reports can be made via:

- Line manager or staff contact
- Complaints procedure

Individuals can also raise concerns if they feel reasonable adjustments have not been considered appropriately, through the complaints process.

We will not tolerate victimisation of anyone raising concerns in good faith.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Organisational needs evolve
- Learning from complaints or incidents identifies improvements