

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **The Organisation**

Friends for Leisure (FFL) is committed to raising awareness about disability issues and the importance of equality and integration and aims to provide a service delivered on the basis of our equal opportunities policy statement:

At Friends for Leisure we believe in equal rights to access and treatment in leisure activities, services and employment. We have committed ourselves to the delivery of an anti-discriminatory service and have devised and implemented a policy which states our position; one which strives to enforce and maintain a working practice of equal opportunities for all.

### **Statement of Values**

Friends for Leisure opposes discrimination of all forms, whether or not barred by legislation, and seeks to ensure that equality of opportunity and a recognition of the value of diversity are reflected in all its activities.

### **Relevant Legislation**

Equality Act, 2010

Disability Discrimination Act, 2005

Human Rights Act, 1998

The Employment Rights Act (as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999)

### **Definitions**

Young people – registered beneficiaries of FFL services.

### **Forms of discrimination**

- Discrimination by or against an employee, volunteer or young person is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably. For example rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not fit in would be direct discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.
- Harassment is prohibited. This is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating hostile degrading humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

### **Responsibilities**

The manager will be responsible for information and consultation on equality and diversity issues.

**The designated trustee for this policy is Paul Walker.**

## **Equality & Diversity Policy**

### **Aims**

This policy defines how FFL aims to ensure that no person shall receive less favourable treatment than others on the basis of:

- gender, including gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- having or not having dependents
- pregnancy, maternity and paternity
- religious belief or political opinion
- race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age

### **Scope**

This policy addresses the following areas:

1. The board of trustees
2. Service delivery
3. Recruitment of staff
4. Working arrangements
5. Volunteers
6. Training and development
7. Publicity
8. Resources
9. Monitoring of the policy in practice

**IMPORTANT** - Breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

### **Trustee Board**

FFL will seek to ensure that the members of the trustee board reflect the diversity of the area's population and the wide range of agencies who work in the voluntary sector. Equal opportunities and diversity will be an essential part of induction for all trustees.

### **Service Delivery**

1. FFL services will be delivered on the basis of the equality and diversity policy statement. (E 1.0 refers).
2. Anti-discriminatory practice is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers and is recognised as good practice.
3. Discriminatory language, behaviour and attitudes will not be tolerated or accepted amongst staff and volunteers and **will** be challenged.
4. Discriminatory language, behaviour and attitudes of young people will be challenged in a way that is appropriate for the young person.
5. All staff, volunteers, young people and parents/carers must be made aware of the complaints procedure and how to use it. (G 1.0 refers)
6. All staff and volunteers must be responsible for their own professional practice and conduct. However, all staff and volunteers have the right to support in complaints, disciplinary or grievance matters as outlined in the individual policies. (P 4.0 - disciplinary & P 4.1- grievance, refer).

**Staff recruitment**

This policy will apply at all stages from recruitment, throughout employment to issues of termination of employment.

1. We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination.
2. Our recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
3. Job selection criteria will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate.
4. Job advertisements will avoid stereo typing or using words which may discourage groups within a particularly protected characteristic from applying.
5. Short listing of applicants will be carried out by the manager and at least one trustee; wherever possible, without prior knowledge of the demographic details of the candidates.
6. Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions relating to pregnancy or about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
7. We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status must not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees regardless of nationality must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before the employment starts to satisfy current immigration legislation.  
(The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency).
8. We will monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of our recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chance of recruitment or any other decision relating to their employment. Analysing this data helps up to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.
9. This policy will be discussed with all staff and volunteers as part of induction.

**Working arrangements**

FFL recognises the benefits of flexibility in working arrangements. Furthermore, we recognise the rights of all employees working under such arrangements to be treated fairly and consistently in comparison to full time, permanent employees and to be given the same opportunities for development. The treatment of pay and benefits for employees on flexible working arrangements is consistent with full time entitlements; wherever possible, these are provided on a pro rata basis.

**Volunteers**

FFL believes that everyone has the right to volunteer and that volunteering should be accessible to all. [V1.0 – Volunteer policy and V 2.0 – Volunteer procedure refer]

1. All volunteers working with FFL will be expected to adhere to this policy and support its implementation.
2. Equality and diversity will be included as part of the induction programme for new volunteers.
3. As far as is practicable, recruitment and selection policies and procedures for volunteers will follow those for paid staff, as follows:
  - Applicants will usually be asked to complete a standard application form.

- A role description for the type of volunteer work will be provided to applicants.
- All applicants will be interviewed by the volunteer co-ordinator and asked about their skills and experience and the commitment they can make to FFL. The interview will be conducted in line with FFL's best practice in regard to equalities.
- All applicants will be required to give two referees.
- If FFL decides not to take someone on as a volunteer, we will explain how the decision was reached and, if appropriate, give the person information about other volunteering opportunities which may be available to them.

### **Training and development**

1. All workers will be given equal opportunity and access to relevant learning and development to enable them to progress both within and outside the organisation. (P 2.4 and P 2.4a refer).
2. Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the charity.
3. Our conditions of service and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.
4. All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to undertake appropriate training in equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice.

### **Publicity**

1. This policy – and all amendments - will be circulated to all staff and volunteers.
2. All proposed amendments will be circulated to trustees for consultation.

### **Resources**

1. Particular attention will be paid to environmental circumstances which cause difficulties to people with a disability within the FFL office. Resources will be made available to meet individual needs where possible.
2. Particular attention will be paid to dietary, religious, cultural or other needs of staff, volunteers and young people, as appropriate.

### **Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the manager and designated trustee. Additional reviews will be undertaken if the need arises; for example, as a result of changes to relevant legislation.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

1. An impact assessment should form part of any relevant new or revised FFL policies or procedures.
2. Relevance in this context is to do with whether the policy or procedure affects people because of race, disability or gender.

3. If a decision is made that a policy or procedure is not relevant to equality then a note should be made at the end of the document.
4. The points to consider in the Equality Impact Assessment include:
  - Who is affected by the policy/procedure?
  - Who is intended to benefit and how?
  - Could there be a different impact or outcome for any individual or group?
  - Is there an actual or potential negative impact on any specific individual or group?
  - Are relations between different individuals or groups likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular individual or group or deny opportunities for others?)
  - Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?
  - What evidence do you have to support your findings?