

# Equality & Diversity Policy

Version 1

Date: 22 September 2014

Changes since the last issue:

Not applicable

## 1. Policy and Objectives

- 1.1 Volunteering Matters has been committed to inclusivity and diversity since its inception in 1962, with its vision of a society where everyone can participate to build strong and inclusive communities.
- 1.2 Volunteering Matters is committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation.
- 1.3 Volunteering Matters is committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination and to developing and maintaining an organisation where colleagues can flourish and it recognises the importance of taking a proactive stance in creating equality of opportunity and promoting diversity.
- 1.4 This Policy aims to remove unfair and discriminatory practices within the Charity and to encourage full contribution from its diverse community.
- 1.5 The Charity also aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its volunteers, stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries in the means by which they can access the services supplied by the Charity.
- 1.6 Volunteering Matters believes that all colleagues, volunteers, stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure sets out details of the systems and process in respect to:
  - Reducing, stopping and preventing all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010 and consequent amendments.
  - Ensuring that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and service provision are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.

### *Definition of Discrimination*

- 2.2 Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status or civil partnership status, gender reassignment,

disability, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation. Discrimination may be direct or indirect, and includes discrimination by perception and association.

- 2.3 Direct discrimination occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.
- 2.4 Indirect Discrimination is the application of a policy, criterion or practice to a person which the employer would apply to others but which is such that:
- *It is detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person the employer is applying it to represents;*
  - *The employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on a neutral basis; and*
  - *The person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.*

### *Harassment*

- 2.5 This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (PD 001 Guidance Harassment & Bullying Prevention).

### *Victimisation*

- 2.6 This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have brought or intend to bring proceedings or they have given or intend to give evidence.

### *Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination*

#### *Gender*

- 2.7 It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of their sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to both men and women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment. Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination. For example, asking a woman during an interview if she is planning to have any (more) children constitutes discrimination on the ground of gender.

#### *Age*

- 2.8 It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.

#### *Disability*

- 2.9 It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as

much access to the service and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.

- *Race, Colour, Nationality and Ethnic Origin*

2.10 It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.

*Sexual Orientation*

2.11 It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because s/he is homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual or transsexual.

*Religion or Belief*

2.12 It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.

*Reasonable Adjustment*

2.13 The Charity has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:

- Making adjustments to premises;
- Re-allocating some of a disabled employee's duties as far as it is reasonably practicable;
- Transferring a disabled colleague to a role better suited to their disability;
- Relocating a disabled colleague to a more suitable office;
- Giving a disabled colleague time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation;
- Providing training or mentoring for a disabled colleague;
- Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees; or
- Any other adjustments that the Charity considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the Charity.

2.14 If a colleague has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by the Charity, they should contact the People Manager.

*Positive Action in Recruitment*

2.15 Under the Equality Act 2010, positive action in recruitment and promotion should apply. "*Positive action*" means the steps that the Charity can take to encourage people from groups with different needs or with a past record of disadvantage or low participation, to apply for positions within the Charity.

2.16 If Volunteering Matters chooses to utilise positive action in recruitment, this will not be used to treat people with a protective characteristic (Appendix II) more favourably but only use it in tie-break situations, when there are two candidates of equal merit applying for the same position.

- 2.17 Volunteering Matters will monitor annually its recruitment activities to ensure that its advertising channels and recruitment methodologies offer access and/or opportunities to all the protected characteristics and then review its approach accordingly. In doing so, the central People team will use form PF 115 Recruitment Monitoring Sheet (Stats).

### **3. Responsibility and Authority**

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Trustees and the Chief Executive to enable the Charity in achieving the objectives of this Policy and to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the Director of Finance & Resources to coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of delivery of all elements of this procedure.
- 3.3 It is the responsibility of the People Manager to maintain the policy and provide colleagues with advice and support as needed.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of Line Managers to ensure that they maintain a close understanding of all elements of this procedure and that this procedure is complied with fully within their department.
- 3.5 It is the responsibility of each colleague to familiarise themselves with this procedure and to ensure their own compliance at all times.
- 3.6 It is the responsibility of all volunteers, subcontractors and agents of the Charity to act in a way that does not subject any other colleagues or beneficiaries to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.
- 3.7 Colleagues may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by the Charity and, in some circumstances, an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.
- 3.8 Colleagues who may need advice and support on Discrimination should contact the People Manager. Colleagues may contact their work representative or trade union representative if access to such an individual is not possible.

### **4. Acting on Discriminatory behaviour/s**

- 4.1. In the event that a colleague is the subject or perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, the Company's Disciplinary, Grievance procedure should be applied (PP 007 Employee Relations).
- 4.2. Volunteering Matters seeks to apply this Policy in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of all colleagues.

- 4.3. The Charity seeks to ensure that all volunteers, sub-contractors and agents act in accordance with this Policy.
- 4.4. The Charity accepts no liability for the actions of volunteers, sub-contractors and agents.
- 4.5. Volunteering Matters offers services in a fashion that comply with the spirit of this Policy.
- 4.6. This Policy does not form a part of any employment contract with any colleague and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied, collateral or express terms to any contract made with the Charity.

## **5. Prevention and Monitoring**

- 5.1. Volunteering Matters is committed to provide a working environment in which the rights and dignity of all its colleagues are respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying.
- 5.2. Volunteering Matters recognises that opposing discrimination necessitates an acceptance of the existence of prejudice within society, an understanding of how it operates and the knowledge, ability and confidence to challenge it. Language reflects the values of our society and its use can perpetuate prejudice and discrimination or reflect the celebration of diversity, and therefore it is important that colleagues use language that is inclusive and not promoting inappropriate cultural bias. (Appendix I - Guide to Non-Discriminatory Language).
- 5.3. Volunteering Matters requires that all new colleagues complete the compulsory online equality and diversity training as part of their induction and yearly thereafter (PP 003 Talent Development) and in line with the Corporate Training Plan (PD 009) and the Mandatory Training Matrix (PD 011).
- 5.4. Application and progress of the Equality & Diversity Policy and accompanying Action Plan will be reported annually to the Charity's Trustees and Council.
- 5.5. For improved transparency, an Equality and Diversity Report will be produced annually and published on the Charity intranet. The report will contain data and commentary and will also describe the steps Volunteering Matters has taken to fulfil its commitment set out in this Policy.

## **6. Related documents**

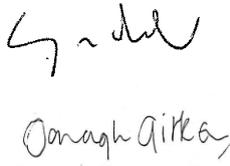
- 6.1. There are a number of relevant documents directly related to this procedure as follows:
  - PP 002 Recruitment & Retention
  - PP 003 Talent Development
  - PP 007 Employee Relations

- PD 001 Guidance Harassment & Bullying Prevention
- PD 009 Corporate Annual Training Plan
- PD 011 Mandatory Training Matrix

## 7. Related forms

7.1. There are a number of forms relating to this procedure as follows:

- PF 001 Equality & Diversity monitor form
- PF 115 Recruitment Monitoring Sheet (Stats)

Action	Name	Date	Signature	Designation
Compiler	L Mariani	20 August 2014		Lead HR Consultant
Reviewed	L De Groot & O Aitken	9 September 2014		Chief Executive & Chief Executive Designate

<b>Authorised</b>	Sir Jon Shortridge	16 September 2014		Chair
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## Appendix I

### Guide to Non-Discriminatory Language

*Language reflects the values of our society and its use can perpetuate prejudice and discrimination or reflect the celebration of diversity. It is important therefore that we use language that is inclusive and that we are sensitive to the risk of patronising, offending or excluding colleagues through the use of language. In the setting of recruitment or training, it is particularly important to avoid any ethnic, sex, religious or inappropriate cultural bias in questions/collateral material.*

Avoid	Do use
affliction, handicap	impairment, condition, disorder, difficulty
chairman/chairwomen	chair, chairperson
christian name	first name, given name, forename, personal name
cleaning lady	cleaner
coloured	black
craftsman	craftsperson
dyslexic	person with dyslexia
(the) ethnics	ethnic minority people, BME people
half-caste	mixed race
homosexual, queer	lesbian, gay man
layman	layperson
man or mankind	humanity, human kind, human race
manpower	Human Resources, HR, colleagues, employees, workforce
mental age of	severe or profound learning difficulties
mental handicap	learning difficulty, learning disability
mad, mentally ill	mental health conditions/issues
old man/woman/person, pensioner, oap, geriatric, senior citizen	older person, elderly person
oriental	Chinese, Japanese, Far East Asian
sex change	gender reassignment
spastic	person with cerebral palsy
the disabled	disabled people
transsexuals	trans(gender) people
victim of, crippled by	person who has, person with

wheelchair bound	wheelchair user
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## **Appendix II**

### **Protected Characteristics**

*Under the Equality Act 2010 the previously known 'Equality strands' have become the protected characteristics and include the following (definitions taken from the Equality and Human Rights Commission):*

#### **Age**

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

#### **Disability**

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

#### **Gender reassignment**

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

#### **Marriage and civil partnership**

In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between same-sex couples [Section 1, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013].

This will also be true in Scotland when the relevant legislation is brought into force [Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014].

Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favorably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

#### **Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

#### **Race**

Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

#### **Religion and belief**

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

#### **Sex**

A man or a woman.

#### **Sexual orientation**

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

**Appendix III****Advice and Support on Discrimination**

Other contacts include (optional):

**Equality and Human Rights Commission**

Arndale House  
The Arndale Centre  
Manchester  
M4 3AQ

3 More London  
Riverside Tooley Street  
London  
SE1 2RG

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 3 Callaghan Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5BT

The Optima Building  
58 Robertson Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8DU

Telephone (England): 0845 604 6610  
Telephone (Wales): 0845 604 8810  
Telephone (Scotland): 0845 604 5510  
Website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

Myddleton House  
115-123 Pentonville Road  
London  
N1 9LZ  
Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**Community Legal Services Direct**

Telephone: 0845 345 4 345  
Website: [www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk)