

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy is to set out the organisation's commitment to treating all people fairly, with dignity and respect and to creating an environment where everyone feels valued, included and able to participate fully in our work and services.

We recognise our legal and ethical responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to promote equal opportunities for all. This policy provides a framework for:

- Ensuring that our services, activities and employment practices are fair, accessible and inclusive
- Valuing and celebrating the diversity of the people and beneficiaries we work with and serve
- Removing barriers and reducing inequality wherever we can
- Creating a culture where staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and partners feel respected, supported and safe
- Making decisions and delivering services in ways that promote equality and challenge discrimination
- Helping us meet our legal duties and demonstrate our commitment to social justice, fairness and positive change

2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone working/ volunteering on behalf of the organisation including the board of trustees.

3. Definitions

Equality: This is about ensuring everybody has equal access to opportunities in line with their needs and protecting them from being treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.

Diversity: This is recognising and respecting the differences between people and groups of people and placing a positive value on those differences.

Inclusion refers to removing barriers, practical, cultural or attitudes, so that people can be involved and contribute without fear of discrimination, bias or exclusion.

4. Policy

4.1 We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity in all areas of our organisation
- Respecting and valuing diversity, recognising the benefits it brings
- Ensuring inclusion so that everyone can participate fully and safely
- Preventing discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Complying with the Equality Act 2010
- Making reasonable adjustments and to removing barriers that prevent people from accessing opportunities or services
- Responding sensitively to different needs, backgrounds and experiences
- Continually improving our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

4.2 Under the Equality Act 2010, people are protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We are committed to upholding these protections in all aspects of our work.

4.3 We will take all reasonable steps to prevent:

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination: policies or practices that put certain groups at a disadvantage
- Harassment: unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic
- Victimisation: treating someone unfairly because they made or supported a complaint
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities

4.4 This policy will form part of the induction procedure for trustees, staff and volunteers.

4.5 We will strive to make training and learning opportunities accessible.

4.6 Staff who feel discriminated against or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Grievance Policy.

4.7 Volunteers and beneficiaries and members of the public who feel discriminated against or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Complaints Policy.

4.8 Serious concerns may be raised via the Whistleblowing policy and procedure

4.9 Failure to follow this policy may lead to disciplinary action or termination of volunteering with us as set out in our relevant policies

4.10 We will make reasonable adjustments to support disabled staff, volunteers, job applicants, or service users. Requests for adjustments will be handled promptly and sensitively. Adjustments may include:

- Accessible formats or communication methods
- Physical adjustments to premises
- Flexible working or support equipment
- Adaptations to roles or processes

5. Monitoring and Review

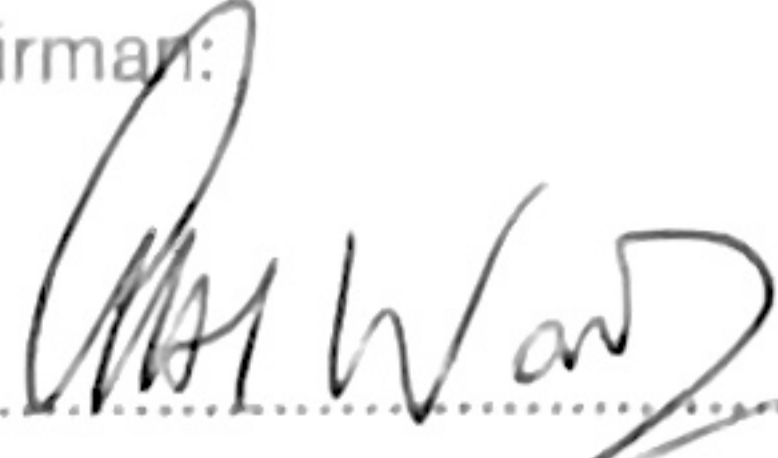
Where appropriate EDI statistics will be collected and analysed to provide insight into the effectiveness of this policy. This includes reviewing employee recruitment and turnover, beneficiary participation and accessibility amongst other indicators.

The Parish Council will review the policy every year or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, operations or organisational learning.

Chairman:

Signed:  Name: STEPHEN BRETT Date: 13/05/26

Vice Chairman:

Signed:  Name: GRAHAM WARD Date: 13/05/2026

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Equal Opportunities – THE ORGANISATION aims to ensure that policies, procedures and practices do not unfairly discriminate against our employees, volunteers, stakeholders and service users.

The Organisation aims to treat people fairly and equitably regardless of who they are, their background or their lifestyle.

Diversity – THE ORGANISATION aims to ensure that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach that can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative.

Inclusion – THE ORGANISATION aims to value everyone's differences and use them to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. The Organisation aims to have an inclusive workplace that has fair policies and practices in place and enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.

Direct Discrimination - as defined in law, occurs when a person is dealt with less favourably than other people because of a 'protected characteristic'. These are defined in the Equality Act 2010 as being:

- Age – a person of a particular age group, but does not apply to those under the age of 18.
- Disability – a person who has a physical or mental impairment, where the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on the person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- Gender Reassignment – a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process, or part of a process, for the purpose of reassigning the person's gender by changing physiological or other attributes of gender.
- Marriage or Civil Partnership – Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman or between same-sex couples'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as civil partnerships. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples.
- Pregnancy and Maternity – a woman who is pregnant has a protected characteristic for the whole pregnancy and for a period of 26 weeks from the day she gives birth (in the THE ORGANISATIONe of a still born child the 26 week period exists if the birth takes place after the 24th week of pregnancy). A woman who has given birth and is breast-feeding has a protective characteristic when accessing premises, services and public functions.
- Race – a person or group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality, including citizenship, and ethnic or national origins. A racial group can include more than two distinct racial groups; e.g. Black Britons would comprise of those people who are both black and who are British citizens.
- Religion or Belief - a person's religion, religious or philosophical belief, lack of religion or lack of religious or philosophical belief. A belief will affect a person's choices or the way they live for it to be considered a protected characteristic.
- Sex – a person who is a man or a woman.
- Sexual Orientation – a person's sexual attraction towards a person of the same sex, another sex, or people of both sexes.

Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council

This Policy uses a wider definition of characteristics and includes, caring responsibility, mental health, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, and union activities.

Associated Discrimination is discrimination against a person because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic, e.g. a person is refused entry to a venue because the person they are with has limited mobility and uses crutches to help them move around.

Discrimination by Perception is discrimination against a person because it is perceived that they possess a particular protective characteristic, e.g. a man who is perceived to be a woman because they have a high voice on the phone is refused access to a men-only service. This would be sex discrimination because the man has wrongly been perceived to be a woman.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral practice, provision or criterion puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic, and when applying the practice, provision or criterion cannot be objectively justified, e.g. an organisation has a policy of reminding people of forthcoming appointments by phone. This would indirectly discriminate against deaf people as they would not receive a reminder of their appointment.

Victimisation means subjecting a person to detrimental treatment because they are or are believed to be bringing proceedings under the Equality Act; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Equality Act or making an allegation that a person has contravened the Equality Act.

A person must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals or being subjected to a detrimental effect, e.g. a patient makes a complaint to a service provider where they were obtaining treatment because they felt they were discriminated against for being gay. The complaint is resolved, but if the person who provides the treatment refuses to treat the gay client, this would be victimization.

Harassment means unwanted behavior that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is any conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted by the recipient, including verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviors, and which violates the victim's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them. Harassment can be sexual, racial, ageist, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any protected or other characteristic exhibited by the individual, e.g. a male employee is disabled and is claiming harassment against his line manager after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability. A female employee shares an office with the male employee and she too is claiming harassment, even though she is not disabled, as the manager's behavior has also created an offensive environment for her.

Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council

Harassment by a third party means unwanted, repeated conduct by a third party based on a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for a person and where the employer does nothing to prevent it from reoccurring. A third party is defined in law as not being the employer or employees of the employer, such as customers or clients, e.g. a manager hears from one of his staff, who is gay, that he is feeling unhappy after a client made homophobic remarks in his hearing. The manager is concerned and monitors the situation. Within a few days the client makes further offensive remarks.

The manager reacts by having a word with the client, pointing out that this behaviour is unacceptable. He considers following it up with a letter to him pointing out that he will ban him if this happens again. The manager keeps the gay employee in the picture with the actions he is taking and believes he is taking reasonable steps to protect the employee from third party harassment.

Positive Action can be taken when it is clear that a group of people who share a protected characteristic and who are, or could become, employees, volunteers or service users, suffer a disadvantage linked to that characteristic, have disproportionately low levels of participation, or have different needs from a service as compared to other groups.

The positive action must be proportionate and aim to increase participation, meet different needs or overcome disadvantage. The positive action must be appropriate to its aim and other actions would be less effective in achieving this aim or likely to cause greater disadvantage to other groups.