

EQUALITY and DIVERSITY POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

“The Forest Upcycling Project is concerned to address and eliminate all areas of discrimination by encouraging positive action and attitude. We aim to promote equality and an opportunity for all people. We are concerned with both practice and employment aspects of our work.”

2. In all activities, the Project recognises that each individual is entitled to expect fair and equal treatment, whether they are seeking employment, are employees, volunteers, service users or potential users of our service.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purposes of this document, we use the following definitions:

- (a) Prejudice – a belief, opinion or assumption formed beforehand without sufficient information or from misinformation, resulting in an unfavourable view about a person or group of people;
- (b) Discrimination – Prejudice plus an action (or omission to act). Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another in similar circumstances; indirect discrimination is where an unjustifiable provision, criterion or practice applies equally but where such application disadvantages a particular group;
- (c) Oppression – Discrimination plus power;
- (d) Positive Action – Taking steps to allow an under-represented group, or group which has historically had less access to particular employment/services, to operate on a more level playing field. Positive Action is legal in this country.
- (e) Positive Discrimination – Employing an individual purely on grounds of their membership of a particular group. This is generally unlawful in this country, but note that where a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOP) applies, this is not unlawful;
- (f) Victimisation – Where a person is treated less favourably as a result of their making a complaint or supporting someone who has made or intends to or is suspected of making a complaint of discrimination;
- (g) Harassment – is a form of discrimination and involves unwanted or unwelcome physical or verbal attention of a sexual/racist/homophobic or other discriminatory nature, which is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient, and which creates a hostile or intimidating environment.

3.2 We acknowledge that there are many definitions of these words, some of which are often used inter-changeably. It is hoped that individuals and groups will use these working definitions as a springboard for their own thinking and policy development

4. WHY THIS POLICY IS NEEDED

- 4.1 The Project recognises that in this society, groups and individuals have been and continue to be oppressed and discriminated against on the grounds of their identity and/or membership of particular groups. Such inequality includes discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, physical or mental disability, learning difficulty, age, class, ethnic or cultural origins, HIV status, gender/ gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership status, religion or beliefs (or absence thereof), responsibility for dependents, pregnancy and maternity, etc. This is not an exhaustive list. We also recognise that people often face simultaneous or multiple oppression.
- 4.2 The Project seeks to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any of the above protected characteristics. Similarly, the Project aims to ensure that awareness of, and access to, its services enables involvement by all interested representatives, regardless of any of these personal differences.
- 4.3 The Project acknowledges that discrimination operates through a number of commonly-held assumptions and prejudices, which are reinforced and upheld by laws, rules and customs, which can result in institutional discrimination in addition to personal prejudice.
- 4.4 This policy underpins all other Project policies and forms.

5. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The Project strives to ensure that it complies with its legal obligations under **The Equalities Act 2010**, which incorporates of the following: Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Human Rights Act 1998, Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, Equal Pay Act 1970, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002; the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- 5.2. The Project recognises that legislation is constantly being updated and amended and is therefore not static. We are committed to keeping up-to-date and complying with the same.
- 5.3. The Project further recognises that existing law does not offer protection to all groups who may experience discrimination. This policy is intended to offer that additional protection in as far as is possible.

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5.4. Vicarious Liability – As an employer, the Project understands that it is held responsible for the acts of its employees except where it has taken active steps to prevent this.

5.5 The Project Management Group strongly recommends that staff, trustees and volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with and have a working understanding of the range of protected characteristics and different type of discrimination that can be experienced and that are illegal. See following website links:

[http://www.fpb.org/hottips/601/The Equality Act 2010: protected characteristics and types of discrimination.htm](http://www.fpb.org/hottips/601/The_Equality_Act_2010:_protected_characteristics_and_types_of_discrimination.htm)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/protected-characteristics-definitions/>

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_governance/Good_governance/equality_act_guidance.aspx

6. EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

6.1 The Project will endeavour to ensure that its employment practices and opportunities are free from bias and will not discriminate in its recruitment, training, promotion and other employment practices. We will take positive action where necessary, including in the recruitment and retention of executive group members, employees and volunteers.

6.2 Discrimination, victimisation or harassment is treated seriously and investigated within the Project under existing grievance and disciplinary procedures. We will raise the awareness of each individual to their right to complain if they believe they have been unfairly treated and ensure that all employees and volunteers are aware of the Project's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.3. The Project recognises the need to develop the skills, knowledge, attitudes and awareness of all involved in order to support its Equal Opportunities Policy. Where appropriate periodical training will take place with staff and volunteers to ensure the policy is well understood.

7. SERVICE DELIVERY

7.1. With due regard for the resources available to the Project, and with the knowledge that each person has differing needs and requirements, the Project is committed to providing a service which addresses this and which is, therefore, of value to each individual.

7.2. We will monitor these services and also recognise the need to review policies and practices through our Project Management Group, to ensure our intentions are met.

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7.3 The Project strives to enable participation in its activities by all people in the Forest of Dean. Participation is open to all. Practical ways in which we try to achieve this include:

- Organising the physical lay out of the workshops, shop floors and offices in such a way as to increase the accessibility for all.
- Encourage participation from all groups of society by making a wide range of activities available for staff and volunteers to do.
- Encourage all staff and volunteers to take ownership of their tasks and to assume responsibility for the completion of the task.
- All training is provided in a format that can be accessed by all staff and volunteers. Those requiring additional support will be given this to ensure full understanding of the training.

8 MONITORING & REVIEW

8.1. The Project Management Group will review this policy periodically and make any appropriate amendments to reflect legislation and local need.

8.2 The Project will establish a Policy review Plan to ensure that equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity is embedded in our work and service ethos.