

Equal Opportunities

Introduction

Old Felixstowe Community Association (OFCA), hereinafter referred to as the Organisation, strives for high standards both as an organisation and as a provider of services. In so doing, we wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.

STATEMENT

Old Felixstowe Community Association is an equal opportunities organisation and promotes equality of opportunity through all of its activities and services. It aims to ensure that no trustee, committee member, volunteer, or service user receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, marital and civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, nor is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

The principle of Equal Opportunities will also apply to facilities, procedures and services.

POLICY

Introduction

This policy has been produced to provide guidance, which will enable the trustees, committees, volunteers, members and service users of the Organisation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving any other people who currently fall outside any legislation.

Definitions

The Equality Act (2010) describes nine “protected characteristics”.

Discrimination - a situation where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of:

- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- gender
- marital and civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- age
- physical, sensory or learning disability
- gender reassignment
- religion and belief (including lack of belief)

- pregnancy and maternity.

In addition to the nine “protected characteristics”, the Organisation would not discriminate against people, because of:

- mental health
- caring responsibilities
- class
- HIV status
- employment status
- unrelated criminal convictions

Associated Discrimination is direct discrimination against a person because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Perception is direct discrimination against a person because it is perceived that they possess a particular protected characteristic.

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.

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

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 Organisation does nothing to prevent it from reoccurring.

Aims

- To ensure equal access to committees, volunteering, premises, activities and services
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality (including the Equality 2010 Act and any other legislation which becomes law)
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of volunteers and service users.

Objectives

- Trustees, committees, volunteers, members and service users will be encouraged, by example and guidance, to challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it be between colleagues and members, or in any other area relating to the Organisation's work.
- Trustees, committees, volunteers, members and service users of the Organisation will be made aware of this policy. A necessary qualification for any position in the Organisation will be a willingness to accept and implement this policy.
- Positive action will be taken to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that all the Organisation's premises and services are accessible to all people.
- The trustees will monitor and review annually equality of opportunity relating to the Organisation's services.

Implementation

- Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the trustees. On a day-to-day basis this responsibility is delegated to the Organisation's General Council and/or Management Committee.
- Any service user or member who feels they have been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Organisation's General Council or Management Committee.
- Any volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be removed from their position.
- Any member of the Trustee Board, any committee or working party of the Organisation found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled and may, where necessary, be asked to leave the organisation.
- Any service user or member found in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation.

Recruitment

- The Organisation will strive to ensure that trustees, General Council/Management Committee members and volunteers reflect the wider communities.
- Vacancies (trustee, committee, paid employment if applicable and volunteers) should be advertised sufficiently widely in order to reach, within reason, the widest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external within the local community.
- Unless a genuine occupational qualification exists which limits a post to a particular group, advertisements and recruitment literature should not imply any preferred group.
- Applicants will be informed, through advertisements, job or role descriptions or application forms, of the Organisation's commitment to equal opportunities and the existence of an Equal Opportunities Policy.

- Person specifications should only include requirements, which are necessary and justifiable. Requirements, which are convenient rather than necessary, may be discriminatory.

Monitoring and Review

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Doreen Savage – Trustee

December 2023