

Friends of Evington Equality and Diversity Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out how Friends of Evington will fulfil its statutory duties and responsibilities effectively, both within its own organisation, and for the affiliated groups and members that help with Friends of Evington's charitable vision and objectives.

1.2 Friends of Evington's constitution is available to view on-line at www.evingtonecho.uk or by requesting a copy. We summarise our charitable objects (aims) within our vision as follows:

1.3 Vision: Friends of Evington seeks to inspire a healthy community in Evington through bringing environmental and educational projects to life, providing solutions that benefit local people and protect the planet.

1.4 This policy sets out how Friends of Evington will fulfil its statutory duties and responsibilities effectively, both within its own organisation, and for the affiliated groups and members that help with Friends of Evington's charitable vision and objectives.

2. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all members, volunteers, stakeholders, partner organisations and members of the public who come into contact with the Friends of Evington are not discriminated against according to their age, marital status, pregnancy status, disability, race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This policy aims to comply with anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Friends of Evington recognises the equal value of all before the law and seeks to provide equality in all areas of our work.

3. Definitions

Equal Opportunities ensure that policies, procedures and practice within Friends of Evington do not discriminate against its members, volunteers, stakeholders, partner organisations and members of the public, due to protected personal characteristics as defined in current

Equalities legislation (e.g. Equalities Act 2010). It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of whom they are, their background or the expression of their beliefs, in accordance with the law.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and can maximise their potential and contribution to the Friends of Evington and to the community. We recognise that people from different backgrounds, with different personal characteristics, can bring fresh ideas and different approaches, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative.

- Direct discrimination, as defined in law, occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably than other people on the grounds of age, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, pregnancy status, gender reassignment status, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- However, in terms of this policy, the definition is taken to be wider and includes, for example, colour, nationality, caring responsibility, mental health, social class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, and trade union activities.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice puts people of a particular group at a disadvantage, which is not justified in relation to the job. For example, a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified.
- Victimisation means that if a person has made, or is making, an accusation of discrimination in good faith, it is unlawful to discriminate against them for having done so, or because they intend to do so, or it is suspected that they intend to do so. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.
- Harassment means unwanted conduct based on race, sex or age etc., which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities, or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual.
- Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist individuals who have been under represented in specific areas, to reach a level of knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' members, volunteers and stakeholders. These measures could take the form of additional training or providing the documentation in other languages to encourage participation from these communities.
- 'Positive discrimination' is not legal in the United Kingdom.

4. Equality Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services.
- To ensure equal access to volunteer opportunities.
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including, but not limited to the Equalities Act 2010.
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation.
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination.
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of members, volunteers, stakeholders and members of the public.
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the Friends of Evington's work.
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in Friends of Evington.
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as it is practicable, that all the Friends of Evington services are accessible to all people.
- To ensure that advancement within the Friends of Evington is determined by objective criteria and personal merit.

5. Policy Implementation

The Friends of Evington strives to ensure that our trustees and volunteers reflect the wider community. Appropriate information will be provided to enable trustees and volunteer members to perform their activities effectively.

6. Grievances

- Any staff member, trustee or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Friends of Evington's established Complaints Procedure.
- Any service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Friends of Evington's nominated trustee, who must report any such complaint to the Friends of Evington

committee. If the complaint is about the nominated person, this should be made through another trustee.

- Any job applicant, potential volunteer or other stakeholder who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise this issue with the nominated trustee, or the Chair of the Friends of Evington.
- Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with Friends of Evington's Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- The Friends of Evington will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination.
- Any member of any Committee or working group of the Friends of Evington found in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave the Friends of Evington.
- Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from the Friends of Evington.
- Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the Friends of Evington will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.
- If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of trustees, staff or volunteers or restricting service users, the nominated trustee should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

Friends of Evington will monitor and evaluate the information that is appropriately collected in relation to the equality duties, and will make periodic reports to the Trustee Board, making recommendations for improvements and changes to the Friends of Evington's activities and communications.