

Lancaster Green Spaces Equality & Diversity (including Equal ops) Policy v.1

Key details

- Policy prepared by: Simon Gershon, Trustee
- Approved by trustees on: 22/11/2018
- Policy operational on: 1/12/2018
- Next review date: 1/12/2020

Introduction

Lancaster Green Spaces, hereinafter referred to as the Charity, seeks to implement best practice in all our activities. In so doing, we recognise the need to encourage diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas.

This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for the Charity (including trustees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and service users) to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues in areas currently outside legislation. Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action.

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and will tackle problems as they arise. We will ensure that those we work with, know our policies and procedures. We will review this policy every two years.

We ask all who work with or for the Charity, to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals.

Policy Statements

Diversity

The Charity will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefit to the local environment for the benefit of the public. The Charity encourages all people it works with and for, to contribute to an atmosphere in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel, knowing that they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

The Charity will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees and volunteers to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in our activities. We will plan and deliver our activities in ways that bring opportunities and access to individuals, rather than barriers.

Equal Opportunities

Lancaster Green Spaces is an equal opportunities organisation. No volunteer, trustee, contractor, consultant or service user will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity (known in legislation as protected characteristics).

In addition, we will give equal opportunities in terms of class, HIV status, nationality, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions or union activities, political, mental health or caring responsibilities.

This principle applies to all aspects of the Charity's activities as a provider of volunteer activities and services, including recruitment, training, facilities and procedures.

Aims and Objectives

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

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- To ensure equal access to training, volunteer opportunities and services
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation currently in force
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation
- To create an atmosphere free from harassment and discrimination
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of trustees, volunteers and service users
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the Charity's work
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in the Charity
- To ensure, through positive action and as far as practicable, that the Charity's activities and services are accessible to all people

Policy Implementation: Expectations

Lancaster Green Spaces recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and encourage diversity in training and services. We will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities.

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Trustees. The responsibility for providing equal opportunities and encouraging diversity is delegated to a named trustee. However, everyone who works with or for the Charity has an individual responsibility to accept the policy and promote its application; and to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality. Therefore the Charity requires individuals:

- To implement measures introduced by the Charity to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and non-discrimination.
- Not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other volunteer or participant on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, or in relation to class, HIV status, nationality, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions or union activities, political, mental health or caring responsibilities.
- To inform the designated Trustee if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

The Trustee with overall responsibility for Equality and Diversity will:

- Ensure Trustees are kept informed on the state of equal opportunities and diversity within the Charity.
- Ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated documents are reviewed bi-annually.
- Review policies, procedures and practices that impact on equal opportunities and diversity practice.

Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion

Lancaster Green Spaces will try to ensure that our trustees and volunteers reflect the wider community.

Clear and accurate information on vacant positions will be made available through role descriptions. Vacancies will be promoted sufficiently widely to reach the widest possible range of candidates.

Recruitment material will not imply any preferred background, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a role to a particular group. Role descriptions that are discriminatory will be avoided. Applicants will be informed, through all recruitment material of the Charity's commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity.

Person specifications may include 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements that are necessary and justifiable. Care, and advice where necessary, is needed to ensure these are not discriminatory.

No questions regarding health and/or disability will be asked until a person is offered a role other than in line with the limited number of exceptions outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (which includes monitoring and

exceptions for certain kinds of jobs amongst others).

The interview panel will take care not to ask discriminatory questions which do not comply with the Organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy Statements, e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, class, HIV status, nationality, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions or union activities, political, mental health or caring responsibilities,

Policy Implementation: Training

In line with the intentions of this policy, the Charity will not discriminate in the provision of training courses or opportunities. Appropriate training will be provided to enable trustees and volunteers to perform their activities effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people. Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for trustees and volunteers

Enforcement

Lancaster Green spaces recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the Charity. The effectiveness of this policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

Policy Enforcement - Grievances

Any 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 Charity's Grievance Procedure.

Any contractor, consultant or service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint in writing through the Chair of Trustees, who must report any such complaint to the Board of Trustees. If the complaint is about the Chair of Trustees, this should be made through another Trustee

Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the Charity's Harassment Procedure. The Charity will not treat lightly any reported grievances.

Policy Enforcement - victimisation or harassment

Incidents of **victimisation** or **harassment** must be reported to the trustees, and will be dealt with by them on a case-by-case basis.

Policy Enforcement – breaches of policy

Any volunteer, including Trustees, found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be suspended from the Charity's volunteer register.

Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from the Charity.

Monitoring

Lancaster Green spaces regards the collection and analysis of data essential in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on the Charity's activities will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters.

The commitment, progress and effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored and reviewed as follows:

- The Trustee responsible for equality and diversity will undertake a bi-annual policy review. All relevant parties will be encouraged to submit comments for consideration.
- The review recommendations will be presented to the next Trustee meeting for their comments and ratification.

Where it appears that there may have been a breach of the policy, the Trustee responsible for equality and diversity will investigate the circumstances, and take action to counter any proven breach of policy.

Definitions

Equal Opportunities ensures that policies, procedures and practice within the Organisation do not discriminate against its employees, volunteers and stakeholders. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of whom they are, their background or their lifestyle.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to the Organisation and to the community. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, 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 favorably than other people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

The Charity also seeks to promote equal opportunities in terms of class, HIV status, nationality, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions or union activities, political, mental health or caring responsibilities.

Discrimination by association - applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic (race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex).

Discrimination by Perception – direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular characteristic of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice puts people of a particular group at a disadvantage and is not justified in relation to the job, for example a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified.

Harassment means unwanted conduct 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 the person.

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association

Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees, or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures could take the form of additional training or providing the job application form in other languages to encourage applicants from these communities.

Protected characteristics - The Equality Act 2010 covers exactly the same groups of individuals that were protected by previous legislation. However, the headings of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity are now to be known as '**protected characteristics**'.

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.