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Equality and Diversity Policy

Aims

Four Seasons Allotments Association (FSAA) strives for high standards as a provider of allotments. In so doing, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.

This policy provides guidance to enable all who are involved with FSAA to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation. Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to appropriate action being taken.

FSAA will undertake effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. Through interaction with members and other activities FSAA will ensure those we work with know our statements of policy.

FSAA will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

FSAA urges members, volunteers etc. 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.

Definitions

Equal Opportunities ensures that policies, procedures, and practice within FSAA do not discriminate against its members. 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 can maximise their potential and contribution to HA 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 favourably than other people on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sex, actual or perceived religion or belief or sexual orientation. However, in terms of this policy the definition is taken to be wider and includes, for example, colour, nationality, marital status or caring responsibility, age, mental health, political, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

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.

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 members, or others who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of knowledge and competencies that is comparable with the law. 'Positive discrimination' at the point of selection for allotments is not permissible.

Policy Statements

Diversity

FSAA will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity, and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and communities. HA encourages all people it works with, and for, to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

FSAA will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

Equal Opportunities

FSAA is an equal opportunities provider of allotments. No member, volunteer, or service user should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory, or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities. Nor will such person's sex, disability, race, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, age, trade union membership or non-membership, be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

This principle applies to all aspects of the FSAA activities and provider of services.

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 allotments
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Rights Act 1996, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Employment Act 2002, Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Religion or Belief Regulations 2003, Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003 and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- 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, and service users.
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the HA's activities.
- To ensure, through positive action and so far, as is practicable, that all FSAA services are accessible to all people.

Policy Implementation

The FSAA recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and encourage diversity in employment/training/services. FSAA will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities. Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy and for overall co-ordination rests with the Management committee.

However, the FSAA believes that all members have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality.

Therefore, FSAA requires individuals:

To implement measures introduced by HA to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity, and non-discrimination. Not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other allotment holder or participant on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital or civil partnership status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory, or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.

To inform the Management Committee if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

FSAA requires its Management Committee

- To ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with policies.

- To ensure that individuals are aware of their legal responsibilities, and FSAA Equality and Diversity Policy.
- To promote actively the benefits of diversity

FSAA will appoint a member of the Management Committee to oversee Equality and Diversity issues. Their role will be:

- To support the committee, offer advice and make recommendations in relation to Equal Opportunities and Diversity and implementing relevant policies and procedures.
- To ensure that the highest standards of Equality Opportunities practice are observed in the delivery of the FSAA activities.
- To collate and discuss relevant information and make recommendations to the committee.
- To offer advice and guidance to members, in relation to FSAA Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedures.
- To seek the views and opinions of members on the operation of the policy in his/ her locality.

Enforcement

FSAA recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity. Any member, 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 with a member of the management committee.

This policy was agreed at committee meeting dated: 25/02/2024

Next review is due: 25/02/2025