

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually by :-

The charity is continuously developing policies and procedures to ensure it meets the requirements of the law, the registration authority and good practice. This policy will be reviewed every year or when guidance or legislation changes.

This policy was last review on:	March 2026
Next review date is:	March 2027
Reviewed by:	Jo Corkery External HR Consultant

Nechells POD actively promotes a safe environment for all. We encourage everyone to bring their best self to work. Our commitment is to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

We have a responsibility to everyone who visits Nechells POD or participates in any of our activities to ensure that they are treated with respect and dignity and so we have adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

The aim is for our Charity to be truly representative of all sections of society and to enable each person to give their best and for all, whether employees, volunteers, trustees, local agencies, community and volunteers, to feel respected. The Charity, is committed against unlawful discrimination to all those who come in to contact with us.

Under the Equality Act 2010 the Protected Characteristics are as outlined below:- .

The Protected Characteristics are –

Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity.

We aim to ensure that our employees, volunteers achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. It is important to note that all employees, volunteers should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, contractors, suppliers or towards members of the general public.

The policy purpose is to create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, and to promote dignity and respect for all where individual differences and the contribution each person is recognized and valued. We do this by :

- Providing equality, fairness and respect for all
- Not unlawfully discriminate any protected characteristic
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination.

What is unlawful discrimination?

Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.

Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.

Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which e.g., one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.

Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.

Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.

Commitment

We encourage equality, diversity and inclusion both in terms of our workforce and for all those who visit our charity.

This commitment includes training managers and all employees, volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

All employees, volunteers should understand they, as well as the employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, participants, suppliers and the public.

We are committed to:-

- Ensuring that all our employees, volunteers and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update processes and policies to align with the law

- All employees, volunteers have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy.
- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace.
- Create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all and where individual differences and the contributions of all employees, volunteers and participants are recognised and valued. This includes training and raising awareness for all about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy and the prevention of unlawful acts.
- Take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, suppliers, visitors, the public and others during the Charity's activities and dealing with matters in line with our policies.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees, volunteers, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so that their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Charity.

Harassment Policy

Harassment pollutes the working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it. It may also have a damaging effect on other employees, volunteers not themselves the object of unwanted behaviour who are witness to it or who have knowledge of the behaviour. All employees, volunteers are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity and which is free from such objectionable conduct. Harassment is a disciplinary offence and it will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

Harassment can be:

- Unwanted conduct which affects the dignity of men or women at work; or
- Bullying of a colleague by intimidatory behaviour; or
- Unfavourable conduct at work, whether verbal or non-verbal, towards someone which could affect his/her dignity at work.

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave. Examples of harassment include:

- Jokes and pranks of a racial nature.
- Lewd comments about appearance.
- Unnecessary physical contact.
- Displays of sexually offensive material, e.g., pin-ups.
- Requests for sexual favours.
- Speculation about a person's private life and or sexual activities.
- Threatened or actual violence.
- Unreasonable and unjustifiable threat of dismissal, loss of promotion, etc.
- Jokes about a person being either too old or too young to do a job properly.

Sexual Harassment

The Equality Act 2010, defines sexual harassment as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. This unwanted behaviour must have either:

- violated someone's dignity or
- created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone

Sexual harassment can be committed by:

- another worker
- an agent acting on behalf of the employer
- a third party.

It can be sexual harassment if the behaviour:

- has one of these effects even if it was not intended
- intended to have one of these effects even if it did not have that effect

Sexual harassment incidents can be a one-off or an ongoing pattern of unwanted behaviour. This could take place in person, but could also happen online, via email, social media or messaging tools. Please refer to our social media policy.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance
- asking questions about someone's sex life
- telling sexually offensive jokes
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images or other sexual content
- touching someone against their will, for example hugging them, brushing up against them
- sexual assault or rape.

It is also important to note that joking or 'banter' can still be classed as sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is usually directed at a person specifically, but this is not always the case. If sexual images are shared amongst people, someone could still raise a complaint of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

We will not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour.

Bullying is defined as any form of physical or verbal attack and/or threat of such, or the abuse of position, in order to attack or undermine the confidence or ability of another, or to place another employee under unreasonable pressure or subjecting another to detrimental treatment, by either act or omission.

You may complain of behaviour that you find offensive even if it is not directed at you personally and you do not personally possess the relevant Protected Characteristic.

You are also protected from harassment related to Discrimination by Perception and Associative Discrimination as defined in the paragraphs of the Equal Opportunities Policy above.

Where harassment arises from people not directly employed by the Charity e.g. participants, visitors, such complaints will be taken seriously and will be pursued with the third party concerned, exercising whatever sanctions are available.

Procedures for dealing with a complaint

Complaints of harassment and/or bullying will usually be dealt with using the Charity's grievance procedure, however, where there is an obvious breach of unacceptable behaviour, they may be dealt with using the Charity's disciplinary procedure.

Any complaints or information from employees, volunteers relating to such complaints will be dealt with fairly, confidentially and sensitively. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and objectively.

Who do I approach if I have any queries about this policy?

Please raise any concerns with Project Manager.