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## Introduction

Suffolk Community Foundation (SCF) works to promote equal opportunities and diversity throughout all of its activities and work. This equality of opportunity and diversity applies to SCF Trustees, staff, and volunteers. SCF 'staff' includes employees, contract workers, agency workers, trainee workers, persons on work experience/placement and former employees. This policy also applies to the provision and access of SCF donor, membership, and grant-making services. The policy set out in this document should be strictly adhered to by all SCF Trustees, staff, and volunteers. Disciplinary action may be taken in the cases of breaches of this policy.

## Aims and objectives

Suffolk Community Foundation aims to:

- Ensure that both the letter and the spirit of the following law and guidance are upheld within the organisation:
  - Equality Act 2010 ("the Act").
  - Relevant guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.
  - Relevant guidance from the Government Equalities Office.
- Create a working atmosphere where there is freedom from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. (Please see Appendix A for Types of Discrimination.)
- Ensure that equal opportunity is given to all applicants for Trustees, staff, and volunteers. Each individual will be assessed purely on his or her ability to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- Ensure equal access to the donor, membership and grant-making services of SCF.
- Promote the principles of diversity and equality of opportunity.
- Ensure that all Trustees, staff, and volunteers are made aware of the provisions of this policy and are expected to express a willingness both to accept and implement it as required.
- Ensure that both employment and advancement within SCF are, and are seen to be, determined solely by application of objective criteria and personal merit.

## Statement of policy

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the following nine 'Protected Characteristics' (PCs):

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

(Please see Appendix B for definitions.)

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of any of these nine PCs.

SCF acknowledges that our society is diverse in race, culture, beliefs, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation, income, age and religion or belief. SCF is committed to developing equal opportunities in all areas of its work and structure. SCF is actively committed to opposing all forms of direct or indirect discrimination against people and ensures that grant seekers, donors, job applicants, trustees, staff, and volunteers receive fair treatment regardless of the nine PCs and the following additional characteristics:

- Socio-economic factors
- Professional skills and experience
- Spent convictions (Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)

SCF accepts that certain groups and individuals in society have been, and are, denied equal opportunities in employment and other areas. These groups and individuals may also be the target of abuse and victimisation. SCF is committed to taking positive steps to prevent such inequalities and harassment within SCF and during any event hosted by SCF.

## **Equality commitments and implementation**

### *Staff*

In order to implement this policy to staff, SCF will:

- Treat all staff members equally with respect to pay and conditions when they are doing equal jobs.
- Regularly check salaries for various jobs within SCF.
- Give equal opportunity and access to training to enable staff to progress both within and outside SCF.
- Communicate the policy to staff and volunteers by emailing copies to them after every review. Staff are expected to have read and understood this policy to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements and to immediately report any breaches witnessed.

### *Public arena*

In pursuit of its aims, SCF will:

- Raise awareness, both in its own organisation and others, regarding the cause and effect of oppression and inequality and of the effect it has on the individual and in the workplace.
- Work with other organisations to promote equal opportunities and diversity.
- Challenge practices, legislation and institutions which seek to discriminate against or deny rights of individuals on the grounds detailed above.
- Seek, and take account of, advice from minority and/or disadvantaged community groups about equal opportunities and diversity issues in relation to service provision and employment.

### *Donor, Membership and Grant-Making Services*

Commitment to equal opportunities and diversity underpins the donor, membership and grant making services of SCF. SCF will seek to be well informed on local needs, issues and priorities to ensure that its work is as sensitive and open as possible to the diverse interests and priorities of its donors, members and grant applicants.

SCF will work to ensure that all its services are provided in a way which promotes awareness of the rights and needs of people from minority groups and enables all people to have access to them. All grant applications

are considered against the same objective criteria. SCF proactively seeks grant applicants from our diverse society by working with statutory services and by attending conferences and funding surgeries for specific minority groups.

As a fund-raising organisation, SCF welcomes donors and members from all sections of the community with an aim to provide a service that meets their needs regardless of the nature of their involvement.

Where it is not appropriate or possible to provide a service that can be used by all, SCF will consider offering services specifically for particular groups.

## *Recruitment of Trustees, staff, and volunteers*

SCF considers it very important that its recruitment and selection procedures ensure that all applicants and potential applicants receive equality of opportunity and will augment the diversity of existing skills, experience, and perspectives.

- Applicants for posts should be given clear and accurate information about such post through advertisements, job descriptions and supporting literature in order to enable them to assess their own suitability for the post.
- Any genuine occupational requirements, such as specific skills or educational requirements, irregular or unsocial hours, travel or the holding of a valid driving licence should be stated in the advertisement.
- Advertisements and recruitment drives should be aimed at as wide and diverse a group of suitably qualified and/or experienced people as possible.
- Posts will be openly advertised and all advertisements and recruitment forms should state that the organisation operates an equal opportunities policy.
- The job description should include any requirements necessary to the post and specify a commitment to the equal opportunities policy.
- A person profile reflecting the essential skills, knowledge and experience for the post holder to carry out the job should be written with the job description.
- Those people involved with recruitment and selection should familiarise themselves with the requirements of all key equalities legislation and guidance.
- A person specification should be drawn up and used as a basis for short-listing and performance evaluation at interview. This should provide objective criteria for selection based on the current analysis of tasks and subsequent job description and not on a previous post-holder's qualities or qualifications.
- No criteria should be used for short-listing or selection that is not stated in the job specification.
- CVs and letters of application should be addressed to a member of the staff or a Trustee who is not involved in the selection process.
- Short-listed candidates should be notified within three weeks following the application closing date and informed of the name and job title of each member of the interview panel.
- Members of the interview panel should have received appropriate training in interview techniques.
- References will be taken up only for candidates who have accepted a job offer and been informed that references will be requested.

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## Responsibilities

All Trustees, staff, volunteers and users of SCF donor and grant making services are entitled to expect unbiased treatment. They also have an obligation to accept their personal responsibility to treat others in the same way.

Specific responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy falls to the Board of Trustees, with the Chief Executive owning the day-to-day operational aspects of the policy. As an employer, SCF may be held responsible for the discriminatory actions of its staff and for harassment experienced by staff members. SCF will implement appropriate procedures to assist the effective implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Chief Executive is responsible for the effectiveness of the SCF Equality and Diversity Policy, which will be reviewed regularly (as part of the quality accreditation process) and action taken as necessary – e.g. to address any imbalance. (See 'Monitoring' below.)

## Complaints

Any Trustee, job applicant, staff member, volunteer, donor, member or grant applicant who feels that he or she has been unfairly treated or discriminated against can raise the matter through the 'Complaints and Grievance Procedure'. A copy of this is available from the Head of Operations. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly, and confidentially. Use of this internal procedure does not remove the individual's right under the Law to take a case to an Industrial Tribunal. However, employees wishing to make a complaint to an Industrial Tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under the Complaints Policy first.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

## Violation of this policy

If there is evidence that discrimination has taken place as a result of someone's actions that are contrary to laid down procedures, they will be personally responsible for that action and SCF may decide not to assist them in their defence. Actions that may be deemed in breach of this policy include:

- failure to observe the guidelines regarding recruitment
- failure to take reasonable steps to ensure that services are made accessible to all
- misrepresentation of the stated views of minority groups
- verbal or physical attacks on individuals or groups
- discriminatory name-calling, insulting remarks, jokes or threats
- written discriminatory remarks or abuse
- encouraging other people to harass or discriminate against another individual or group
- provocative behaviour, such as wearing racist badges
- bringing into the premises and openly displaying material such as leaflets and magazines which in any way support discrimination

In the case of a breach of this policy the following actions will be taken by the Chief Executive:

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- The incident will be discussed with the perpetrator, restating our policy. A retraction of the offending remark or apology may be requested where appropriate.
  - Aid and support will be provided to the injured party/parties.
  - In the case of physical attack, the perpetrator, whatever their status, shall be immediately suspended from the organisation pending an investigation. There shall be no delay in such an investigation.
  - In the case of a member of staff being the perpetrator, disciplinary action may be taken.
  - A written report of the incident and the action taken will be made.

## **Monitoring this policy**

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to monitor the effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity Policy, as follows:

- All aspects of donors, membership, grant-making and personnel policies and procedures will be kept under review to ensure that they do not operate against the principles of equal opportunities and diversity.
- Any Trustee, staff member or volunteer may make recommendations on working practice and revision of this policy.
- The Foundation will provide equal opportunities and diversity training, as required, for staff and Trustees.

Date: Reviewed March 2021

Signed:  
Chief Executive

## Types of discrimination (in relation to the 9 Protected Characteristics (PC))

### Direct discrimination

- Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.

### Associative discrimination

- This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic (e.g., a mother of a disabled child).

### Perceptive discrimination

- This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### Indirect discrimination

- Indirect discrimination can occur when there is a condition, rule, policy, or a practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination can be justified if the organisation can show it acted reasonably in managing its business.

### Harassment

- Harassment is “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.”
- Employees are 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. SCF extends this right to Trustees, other staff, job applicants/potential applicants, volunteers, members, donors, and grant applicants.
- Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

### Third party harassment

- SCF will take appropriate action to provide Trustees, other staff, job applicants/potential applicants, volunteers, members, donors and grant applicants with protection from third party harassment.

### Victimisation

- Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Act; or because they are suspected of doing so.
- An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.
- There is no need to compare treatment of a complainant with that of a person who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act.
- SCF will take appropriate action to provide Trustees, other staff, job applicants/potential applicants, volunteers, members, donors, and grant applicants with protection from victimisation.

## The Protected Characteristics

### Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g., 32-year olds) or range of ages (e.g., 18-30-year olds).

### Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

### Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples may be married or may have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

### Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

### Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

### Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it, but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices, or the way you live, for it to be included in the definition.

### Sex

A man or a woman.

### Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.