

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

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## SECTION 1: POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Wild Hub is dedicated to providing equal opportunities for employment, education, services, and societal participation in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that discrimination, harassment, and victimisation are unacceptable. Our commitment extends to all individuals, including job applicants, employees, students, volunteers, service users, and contractors, ensuring fair and equal treatment for everyone involved with our organisation.

The objective of this policy is that no individual faces less favourable treatment, discrimination, or lack of opportunities based on the 9 protected characteristics defined below. Additionally, we will not discriminate based on political beliefs, trade union membership, social class, responsibility for dependents, physical attributes, ex-offender status as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, lack of formal qualifications where not required, or any other unjustifiable grounds within the context of this policy.

This policy will influence and affect every aspect of The Wild Hub's project and all individuals involved in any capacity.

## SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

**Protected Characteristics** - The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are: sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race (including ethnic/national origins, colour & nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), age, disability, pregnancy and maternity.

**Direct Discrimination** – occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others due to a protected characteristic, regardless of whether they possess that characteristic. For example, refusing to employ someone because they are a caregiver for a disabled person.

**Indirect Discrimination** – occurs when a universal practice, policy, or rule adversely affects someone due to a protected characteristic. If this action cannot be justified and disadvantages someone with a protected characteristic, it constitutes indirect discrimination.

**Detriment arising from disability** – occurs when an organisation treats an individual unfavourably due to something arising from the individual's disability, and this treatment cannot be justified in relation to the work. For example, dismissing someone because of their poor attendance record when their absence is directly related to a disability. The organisation must

demonstrate that the dismissal was a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

**Duty to make reasonable adjustments** - When an organisation's provision, criterion, or practice places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled individuals, the organisation has a duty to take reasonable steps to mitigate the disadvantage. This may include modifying the working environment, providing auxiliary aids, and supplying necessary information.

**Harassment** - unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This includes third-party harassment where the organisation has failed to take reasonably practicable steps to prevent the harassment.

**Victimisation** - when an individual is treated badly because they have made a complaint about discrimination or have given evidence in a discrimination case.

**Positive action** - proportionate steps can be taken by an organisation to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome, or minimise a disadvantage, to enable them to participate. Examples include, setting equality targets (but not quotas which are unlawful); encouraging people from particular groups to apply where they are under-represented; training for promotion or skill training for employees from under-represented groups who show potential.

**Occupational requirement** - if an employer can demonstrate that possessing a particular protected characteristic is essential for a job and is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, then refusing to employ someone who does not possess that characteristic is not unlawful.

### **SECTION 3: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

The Directors are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy. Employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate with The Wild Hub to ensure the policy's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities and preventing discrimination or harassment. To implement this policy, we shall:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants, volunteers, and relevant others, ensuring they understand the procedure for making a complaint.



- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties related to implementing the equal opportunities policy into the job descriptions and work objectives of all staff. During project induction, employees and volunteers will be briefed on their responsibilities regarding this policy.
- Ensure that individuals involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques.
- Incorporate equal opportunity notices into general communications practices.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.
- Employees and volunteers should report suspected discriminatory acts, practices, or cases of harassment to The Wild Hub's Directors.
- Employees and volunteers must not victimize or retaliate against anyone who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment.
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## SECTION 4: CONDUCT & BEHAVIOURS

All staff, volunteers and anyone involved in delivering services through The Wild Hub are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner. The Wild Hub will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- making threats
- physical violence
- shouting
- swearing at others
- persistent rudeness
- isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- telling offensive jokes or name calling
- displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist / racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email / text message or any other format.
- any other forms of harassment or victimisation.

The behaviours listed above are considered disciplinary offences within The Wild Hub and can lead to disciplinary action. Such matters will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and proportionately. Serious breaches of the Equal Opportunities policy can potentially be treated as gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal. Employees and volunteers should also be aware that they can be held personally liable, as well as The Wild Hub, for any act of unlawful discrimination.



Any Director who had knowledge that such discrimination or harassment had occurred within the project but who had taken no action to eliminate it will also be subject to disciplinary action under The Wild Hubs disciplinary procedure.

The Wild Hub encourages staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally whenever possible, depending on the circumstances. Regardless of whether an issue is handled informally or formally, it is crucial for staff who may have caused offence to understand that claiming a lack of intent or blaming individuals for being over-sensitive is not a valid defence. The impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, is what matters. This perspective should guide the resolution of the immediate issue and the prevention of similar problems in the future.

## ***SECTION 5: MONITORING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & DIGNITY at WORK***

The Wild Hub will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions, personnel practices, and pay procedures to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity are being achieved within the project.

This will also involve considering any potential indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, The Wild Hub will implement them. Additionally, The Wild Hub will make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to address substantial disadvantages caused by disability.

The Wild Hub will maintain and review the employment records to monitor the progress of this policy, which will be reviewed at regular intervals. Monitoring may involve:

- The collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applications and current employees.
- Recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.
- The examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants.

## SECTION 6: RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

The recruitment and selection process is key to our equal opportunities policy. We will train employees to ensure non-discriminatory selection and recruitment decisions. Promotions will be merit-based and aligned with this policy. Job descriptions and personnel specifications will reflect our commitment to equal opportunities.

We will consistently advertise vacancies in a non-discriminatory way, encouraging applications from all qualified individuals. Our recruitment process will focus on selecting the most suitable candidates based on relevant experience, skills, and qualifications. The Wild Hub will apply its equal opportunities policy at all recruitment stages. Short-listing and interviewing will involve multiple people where possible, with questions related to job requirements. Selection decisions will not be influenced by the prejudices of other staff.

## SECTION 7: TRAINING & PROMOTION

The Wild Hub will ensure all managers are trained on equal opportunities and equipped to identify and effectively address discriminatory acts, harassment, or bullying. Managers will be responsible for actively promoting equal opportunity within The Wild Hub.

Training will also be provided to employees and volunteers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities and dignity at work and what they can do to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Our promotional system will be non-discriminatory and regularly reviewed to assess its effectiveness. If a group of workers with a particular protected characteristic appears to be excluded from promotion, transfer, training, or other benefits, the system will be examined to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

### **Terms of Employment, Benefits, Facilities & Services**

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities, and services will be periodically reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination based on any protected characteristic.



## **Equal pay**

The Wild Hub is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent, or work of equal value. To achieve this, The Wild Hub will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

## **SECTION 8: COMPLAINTS**

The Wild Hub will address all allegations of discrimination or harassment seriously, confidentially, and promptly, whether made by employees, volunteers, trustees, clients, or other third parties. Appropriate action will be taken, and all complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation's grievance, complaints, or disciplinary procedures. The complainant will be informed of the outcome per these procedures. Additionally, we will monitor the number and outcomes of discrimination complaints.

If you wish to make a complaint of discrimination, you should use The Wild Hub's grievance procedure.

## **SECTION 9: POLICY REVIEW**

An annual comprehensive policy review will be conducted to ensure that the policy remains current and meets the organisation's legal and ethical obligations.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
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