



## **Equality and Diversity at Woodland Ways**

### Diversity and inclusion statement

We value the range of different people in Moreton Hall, the part of Bury St Edmunds in which Woodland Ways is active, but recognise some people can be disadvantaged and discriminated against as a member or as a service user. We are committed to developing policies to tackle inequality and exclusion, by ensuring services are accessible and our practices fair.

We want to make sure people are not discriminated against for any reason, including their disability, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, faith, beliefs, culture, nationality, age, sexuality, family circumstances, socio-economic status. This list is not complete and there are other forms of discrimination, which we will not tolerate. We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

Social inclusion is about enabling people to take part in society on equal terms with others. This can be achieved in a number of ways and could mean improving a person's access to Woodland Ways' activities and services.

### **We will:**

use our influence to promote understanding and harmony between people, working whenever possible in partnership with other organisations;  
seek to eliminate any discrimination and harassment that might occur,  
achieve and demonstrate high standards of good equality practice

### **Scope**

Our policy explains your rights and responsibilities, whether as a:  
user of our services and visitor to our sites;  
trustee  
volunteer

## **How will we meet our commitments?**

We will ensure that:

- we take a positive approach to making our services, woodlands and information accessible to all;
- appropriate training will be available to trustees in order that they will have the competence necessary for translating this policy into positive action;
- we comply with all our statutory and equality standard requirements;
- our trustees and volunteers are treated with dignity, fairness and respect;
- we prevent harassment and bullying at Woodland Ways activities and any person who feels that he or she has been subjected to such harassment may complain;
- we always encourage and welcome comments and complaints in order that our services continue to improve.

## **Our standards**

Some of our standards are applicable to all areas of diversity and inclusion (general), whilst others are specific to social exclusion, race, disability, gender, religion & religious belief, sexual orientation & gender reassignment, and age

### **General**

We want to ensure that:

- we work with local people and in partnership with other organisations to improve the environment and therefore quality of life of the people of Moreton Hall now and for the future
- we are committed to providing fair and equal access, especially for those who feel excluded and/or are disadvantaged;
- we aim to have no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, sex and disability;
- everyone who comes into contact with Woodland Ways trustees and volunteers is treated in an open and respectful manner;
- trustees and volunteers are also entitled to fair treatment, dignity and respect;
- we will deliver our services in as inclusive and fair a way as possible, without discrimination, prejudice or bias;
- information about services is made available to the public in a form which they can access and understand;
- all people who receive our services are actively encouraged to comment on the way they perceive them to be delivered;
- We will respond to all complaints and in particular approach in a positive manner any that relate to practices that suggest unfairness, discrimination and lack of access;

## **Race**

we will not tolerate harassment of trustees, service users or volunteers for reasons of a person's race, ethnic origin, nationality or national origin.

## **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states that a person has a disability "if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her normal day to day activities". The definition covers a wide range of physical, sensory and learning disabilities, as well as mental health problems. In our society, non-disabled people have traditionally been in a position of greater power. Unhelpful attitudes have stemmed from ideas of perceived superiority of non-disabled people. We believe in a society where all people are equal, whether they have a disability or not.

We will aim to identify and if necessary make changes to any policies and practices that disadvantage people with disabilities in receiving our services or taking part in Woodland Ways' activities or meetings;

we will not tolerate harassment of employees, service users or volunteers for reasons of a disability.

## **Gender**

we will not treat a person less favourably than another on the grounds that he or she intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment; and we will not tolerate harassment of employees, service users or volunteers for reasons of their gender or gender re-assignment.

## **Social inclusion**

The Government defines social exclusion as:

"A shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment,

poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown."

Social inclusion is the process of seeking to ensure that everybody is empowered to participate in society on equal terms.

Poverty is a key element, but social exclusion can also be associated with one or more of

the following:

- family conflict;
- being in care;
- being an ex-offender or having a criminal conviction;
- being from a minority ethnic group;
- speaking a language other than English;
- living in a rural area;
- being gay, lesbian or bisexual;
- living in a deprived neighbourhood;
- homeless people; having a disability;
- having undergone gender re-assignment;
- teenage mothers;
- young people who run away from home;
- families with low incomes;
- children who have suffered family conflict;
- older people;
- people who are long-term unemployed
- those who misuse alcohol, harmful substances and drugs; and
- children who are excluded from school.

### **Religion, culture or belief**

Discrimination on the grounds of religion, faith, culture or belief may occur because of commonly held assumptions about a particular religion, custom or because of a lack of understanding of prayer, dietary or other requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that no trustee or volunteer receives less or more favourable treatment on the grounds of their religion, faith, culture or belief. This commitment extends to a person's allegiance to a society or association as long as such a membership does not conflict with our corporate activities.

We will not tolerate harassment of employees, service users or volunteers for reasons of their religion, faith, culture or belief.

### **Sexual orientation**

A person's sexual orientation has no bearing whatsoever on their ability or suitability to participate in Woodland Ways. No volunteer or trustee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. We will not tolerate harassment of trustees, service users or volunteers for reasons of their sexual orientation.

## **Age**

Discrimination on the grounds of age usually arises because of assumptions made about a person's value and abilities because of their age. For example older people can be stereotyped as having outdated ideas and being inflexible with regard to change. Young people are sometimes treated as though their views are unimportant because it is thought they lack experience, maturity or commitment.

We are committed to the following:

- age alone is not used as a basis on which service priorities are decided;
- we ensure that consultation involves people across the age ranges;
- no trustee or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age,
- We will not tolerate harassment of employees, service users or volunteers for reasons of their age.

## **Caring responsibilities**

In society today, women are particularly affected by having responsibilities outside work, which may impact on their work. However, it should also be recognised that men also have such responsibilities. We will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of caring responsibilities.

## **Service delivery**

We are committed to providing high-quality services which meet the needs of, and are available to, all our residents. People who use our services should not face discrimination or harassment.

Trustees, volunteers and any other people providing our services are also entitled to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of service users and service providers.

We will aim to:

- provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of the community without prejudice or bias;
- consult with and include all sections of the community in order to improve the way we deliver our services;
- identify those people within the community whose individual needs are less well met than those of other people;
- monitor and review all our services to make sure that they do not discriminate;
- make changes to our services that will lead to improvement in their delivery;
- provide clear information about our services, and to make this information available in the formats and languages needed by our citizens or residents, and to adhere to

- our standards for the accessibility of information;
- celebrate cultural diversity;
- work with others to provide an environment free from harassment, violence and crime; and
- welcome customer feedback, endeavour to put things right and resolve to use what we learn to improve future service provision.

## **Public involvement**

Consultation has an important role to play to help us implement improvements in the services we provide. Through public involvement we can assess the likely effects of proposed policies before they are introduced. We therefore need to consult with people who are likely to be affected by our policies.

## **b Access to information and services**

We recognise the importance of effectively communicating with our service users. For this reason we are committed to making information about our services accessible by using Plain English (language that is easily understood);

We will continue working towards providing the public with as much information as possible. This policy makes us more accountable and in the process raises our profile in the community we serve.

## **c Complaints procedure**

Comments and complaints can be made by phone, in person or in writing. We will try to put matters right and improve things for the future. A trustee will investigate the complaint. If the complainant remains unhappy with the response, the whole trustees meeting will investigate.

## **Responsibilities for diversity, inclusion and sanctions**

All trustees have a responsibility for working towards equality and inclusion and for implementation of this policy. The following actions by trustees may be regarded as infringements:

- Discriminating against fellow trustees or volunteers on grounds that cannot be justified
- Persuading, or trying to persuade, other people to discriminate unfairly
- Harassment or bullying
- Victimising individuals who have made allegations about discrimination or who have provided information about such discrimination.

Such matters will be addressed by the steering group.

*Acknowledgement:*

*This policy is based on the Suffolk County Council policy for Equality.*