



## Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedure

### Contents

- [Section 1: Policy Statement](#)
- [Section 2: Scope](#)
- [Section 3: Definitions](#)
- [Section 4: Protected Characteristics](#)
- [Section 5: Equality and Diversity in the Delivery of Services](#)
- [Section 6: Equality and Diversity in Employment Matters](#)

### 1.0 Policy Statement

The Woodcraft Folk aims to create an environment where:

- Difference and diversity are promoted and celebrated
- Discrimination is challenged and opposed
- Equal opportunities and access to both the programme and physical environment is provided as a right
- The local community is reflected in membership and partnerships within that community are pursued
- Issues of unfairness and discrimination are raised with members to explore the type of environment we aim to create in society

In order to achieve this Woodcraft Folk is committed to:

- General Council, Nations and Regions, Projects, Centres, Districts and Groups hold regular discussions on equality to formulate local policies and action plans to further the Woodcraft Folk aim of equality for all and to meet our strategic aim of reaching out to new communities
- Groups and districts should build partnerships within their local community to ensure that they reflect and engage this community they serve
- Discrimination will not be tolerated and will be challenged
- Woodcraft Folk will equip members to challenge and recognise discrimination.
- Training will be provided around equality of opportunity including issues around good and bad practice.
- We recognise that discrimination (both overt and institutionalised) can lead to physical and mental stress, lack of confidence, isolation and is a form of abuse.
- No child shall be refused access to a Woodcraft Folk Group because of their parents' or carers' inability to assist with the group
- We recognise the right of oppressed groups to organise autonomously within the Woodcraft Folk and for those to assist the Woodcraft Folk as a whole in combating discrimination through training, education, etc. These groups will at times support each other in their work.

In matters of employment it is Woodcraft Folk's policy to treat job applicants, employees, ex-employees, contract, casual and agency workers in the same way, regardless of their differences. This includes self-employed people whose contract requires them to carry out the work personally. Capitalising on what is unique about individuals and drawing on their different perspectives and experiences adds value to the organisation and generates greater creativity and harmony between



different cultures and groups. Equality and diversity is about implementing and maintaining good employment practices to eliminate inequality of treatment between people and provide everyone with the same chance to succeed.

This policy and procedure is non-contractual and can be subject to amendment, withdrawal or substitution at any time in line with UK and European Law. All changes will be communicated to employees. By accepting employment with Woodcraft Folk employees are deemed to have consented to both their Terms and Conditions of Employment and undertaken to comply with this policy and procedure. This policy is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of and volunteers working within Woodcraft Folk.

The general principles of this policy apply to everyone, both employees and volunteers. However, this policy also has separate sections relating to the delivery of our services ([section 5.0](#)) employment matters and ([section 6.0](#)).

## 3.0 Definitions

### 3.1 Protected Characteristics

A set of groups who are covered by equality legislation to protect them against less-favourable treatment in both employment and the delivery of services.

### 3.2 Direct Discrimination

Where an individual is treated less favourably to another person in the same or similar circumstances because they have or are thought to have (see Perceptive Discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a Protected Characteristic (see Associative Discrimination below). E.g. Not employing someone because they have a disability.

### 3.3 Indirect Discrimination

The imposition of a condition or requirement which has an adverse impact on a minority group of people unless it can be justified on the grounds of business need. E.g. a height requirement of 5'10" will eliminate some men but proportionately more women and so may be considered unlawful. Indirect Discrimination covers all Protected Characteristics except pregnancy and maternity.

### 3.4 Associative Discrimination

The direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic, with the exception of marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. E.g. Failing to promote someone if they care for a disabled individual and the employer feels this may impact their ability to do the role satisfactorily.

### 3.5 Perceptive Discrimination

The direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular Protected Characteristic except marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. E.g. Failing to promote an individual because they appear too young to do the job sufficiently.



### 3.6 Harassment

Unsolicited and unwelcome workplace behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of the recipient or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for employees. Harassment can be by an employee, worker or a third party to the Organisation. Employees can lodge complaints of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them and are also protected from harassment because of Perception or Association. Except for marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

### 3.7 Victimisation

When a person is treated less favourably due to having: Brought proceedings against a Organisation under a piece of employment legislation; given evidence of information in connection with such proceedings or made an allegation of a breach of employment legislation within the Organisation.

### 4.0 Protected Characteristics

Woodcraft Folk will not tolerate, accept or condone discrimination (direct, indirect, associative or presumptive), harassment or victimisation against anyone based on the set of protected characteristics below:

Age	Sex
Disability	Sexual orientation
Gender reassignment	Marriage and civil partnership
Race	Pregnancy and maternity
Religion or belief	

### 5.0 Equality and Diversity in the Delivery of Services

#### 5.1 General Policy

Woodcraft Folk absolutely believes in the principles of equality and diversity. As such no child or adult should be discriminated against because they have a protected characteristic, whether direct, indirect, associative or presumptive. Both employees and volunteers should ensure that any activities they are organising are as open and accessible to all as possible, making reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure participation by all.

Woodcraft recognises the importance and value of diversity. As such it encourages both employees and volunteers to engage with all members of their local community, and it aspires to have a membership that reflects that local community. Woodcraft Folk will also actively seek out disadvantaged or marginalised groups and seek to include them in our activities.

Woodcraft Folk also recognises that despite many advances there are many groups throughout the UK, and indeed the world, that face discrimination, persecution and oppression because of a particular trait, whether that be on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, or pregnancy or maternity. In addition to ensuring that our policies protect these groups from adverse treatment within the Woodcraft Folk, the organisation also commits itself to educating its members and employees on these issues and campaigning against such treatment.



## 5.2 Parental Involvement

Woodcraft Folk is an organisation that relies on volunteers including parents to deliver most of its activities. While recognising the invaluable work that parents do, no child should be discriminated against because their parent(s) are unable to volunteer their time with Woodcraft Folk.

## 5.3 Accessibility

Woodcraft Folk will work towards ensuring that our offices, activity centres, camp sites and other venues are as accessible to as many people as reasonably possible.

## 5.4 Planning and delivery of activities

All employees and staff should ensure that they take in to account all potential participants in any activity and ensure that the activity is as open and accessible to as many as possible. This may include, for example, thinking about the physical requirements of the activity, the ability of some people to attend (e.g. timings/days of the week/parenting responsibilities/exams/religious observation)

## 5.5 Child Care

Where reasonably possible, any training or activity aimed at adult volunteers should allow for childcare to be available if required, with the exception of social activities.

## 6.0 Equality and Diversity in Matters of Employment

### 6.1 General Policy

The Organisation is opposed to any form of less favourable treatment through either Direct, Indirect, Associative or Perceived Discrimination. This includes harassment or victimisation on the grounds of all Protected Characteristics. The Organisation will ensure that any part-time workers or fixed-term employees are treated as favourably as comparable full-timers.

This policy and procedure applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment, training, conditions of work, pay, benefits and every other aspect of employment. Those employees particularly involved in recruitment should request training if they have any doubt about the application of this policy. Employees will be recruited and selected, promoted and trained on the basis of role needs, merit and ability.

Every employee or worker connected to the Organisation has a personal responsibility for the implementation of this policy and procedure and any instance of doubt about its application should be addressed to The General Secretary. All employees and workers have a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted and to offer support to any fellow employee or worker who may be the subject of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, encouraging them to report it to their Line Manager or The General Secretary. This policy and procedure applies to both verbal and physical actions as well as any forms of documentation including electronic communication such as text messages, e-mails and faxes etc. This policy and procedure also applies to any work-related social events.

### 6.2 Protected Characteristics



### **6.2.1 Disability**

No pre-employment health check will be taken prior to a job offer being made unless it is for the following reasons:

- To decide whether we need to make any reasonable adjustments for the applicant to enter the selection process
- To decide whether an applicant can carry out a function intrinsic to the job
- To monitor diversity among people making applications for roles
- To take positive action in assisting any disabled person apply for roles
- To assure ourselves that a candidate has the disability they require to hold the role.

Applicants or employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the Organisation and may also wish to advise the Organisation of any “reasonable adjustments” to their employment or working conditions which they consider would assist them in the performance of their duties. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals of this nature and where reasonable and reasonably practicable for the Organisation to accommodate those proposals they will, in accordance with the statutory provisions under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its future amendments.

### **6.2.2 Sexual Orientation**

Sexual Orientation harassment is a particular form of harassment against anyone who has a sexual orientation towards a person of the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes. Woodcraft Folk does not condone discrimination or harassment of any kind regarding sexual orientation and encourage all employees to raise any complaints they may have regarding this to their Line Manager or The General Secretary immediately.

### **6.2.3 Gender Reassignment**

Gender Reassignment harassment is a particular form of harassment against a transsexual person. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. This does not need to be someone under medical supervision. The Organisation does not condone discrimination or harassment of any kind regarding Gender Reassignment and encourage all employees to raise any complaints they may have regarding this to their Line Manager or The General Secretary immediately. Cross dressers are not covered by this policy and procedure.

### **6.2.4 Civil Partnership**

Civil Partnership harassment is a particular form of harassment against a same sex partnership under the provisions of the Civil Partnership Act 2004. Woodcraft Folk does not condone discrimination or harassment of any kind regarding Civil Partnership and encourage all employees to raise any complaints they may have regarding this to their Line Manager or The General Secretary immediately.

### **6.2.5 Age**

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through challenging age stereotypes and recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce throughout the employment relationship. Further details can be obtained from the Organisation's Age Discrimination Policy and Procedure.

### **6.2.6 Pregnancy and Maternity**



Employees are protected against discrimination on the grounds of their pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory leave.

### **6.2.7 Sex(ual)**

Sexual harassment is a particular form of harassment. It is conduct at work which is directed towards an employee, either male or female, by another employee or group of employees which is of a sexual nature, or which is based on a person's gender, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status and regarded as unwelcome or offensive.

The following are examples:

- Unwanted physical contact, or conduct which is intimidating
- Suggestions for sexual favours
- Derogatory or demeaning remarks based on gender
- The display of sexually explicit material in the workplace
- Homophobic remarks made to or about an employee
- Deliberate isolation of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of an employee's sexual orientation.

Any form of sexual harassment is a potentially serious disciplinary matter.

### **6.2.8 Racial Discrimination**

Racial discrimination is a particular form of harassment. It is conduct at work which is directed towards an employee by another employee or group of employees which is based upon a person's race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin and is regarded as unwelcome or offensive.

The following are examples:

- Jokes about race
- Offensive names used
- References to people by offensive racist descriptions
- Verbal or physical abuse because of a person's race or colour
- Detrimental behaviour because of a person's race
- Denial of opportunity because of race
- Threatened or actual physical assault motivated by race, colour, ethnic or national origin

### **6.2.9 Religious or Belief Discrimination**

Religious discrimination is a particular form of harassment. It is conduct at work which is directed towards an employee by another employee or group of employees which is based upon a person's religion or belief and is regarded as unwelcome or offensive. It also includes a lack of religion or no belief.

The following are examples:

- Threatened or actual assault motivated by religious differences
- Office gossip or detrimental speculation about an employee's religion or religious practices
- Teasing someone due to their religious convictions;
- Derogatory remarks about a particular religion.



Any form of religious or belief discrimination is a potential disciplinary matter.

Political beliefs are not protected.

### **6.3 Equal Pay**

Men and women are entitled to be paid equally without any bias on the grounds of their sex as set out under the Equal Pay Act 1970. All reasonable and legal steps will be taken to ensure that male and female staff receive equal pay for the same work, work rated as equivalent and for work of an equal value.

### **6.4 Rehabilitation of Offenders**

The Organisation will not discriminate against anyone who has a spent conviction under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. See Woodcraft Folk's Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders Policy for more details.

### **6.5 Whistle-Blowers**

The Organisation will not discriminate against anyone who under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 'blows the whistle' on account of any alleged wrong doing on the part of the Organisation. This applies to not only employees but workers as well.

### **6.6 Monitoring**

Job applicants may be asked to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age and any disabilities. The Organisation guarantees that this form will be used for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of its Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure only. This form will not go to the recruitment team but to a named separate individual. Furthermore, the Organisation will monitor the composition of the workforce and introduce positive action if it appears that this policy and procedure is not fully effective.

### **6.7 Positive Action**

Should inequalities among the workforce become apparent, positive action may be taken to redress the imbalance.

Such measures may include:

- Advertising jobs in ethnic or female interest publications, as appropriate;
- Introducing English language training;
- Encouraging under-represented groups to apply for suitable posts;
- Making contact with disabled people via the local Job Centre Plus.

#### **6.7.1 Section 159 of the Equality Act**

In the event of Woodcraft Folk believing there is a certain Protected Characteristic that is at a disadvantage in a particular area of work or the employment relationship; they may choose to treat an employee with that Protected Characteristic more favourably in line with Section 159 of the Equality Act 2010, which came into force April 2011.

However this will only occur if:



- A is as qualified as B to be recruited or promoted;
- Taking the action is a proportionate means of achieving the aim that Woodcraft Folk desires to overcome or minimise. I.e. allowing those disadvantaged to participate in a work activity, where they may not have previously been able to.

The Organisation will not allow this practice to occur automatically but each case will be considered on its individual merits.

### **6.8 Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**

If an employee feels that they have been subjected to a breach of this Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure then they should raise their concerns using Woodcraft Folk's Grievance Policy and Procedure. Any employee making a complaint of unfair discrimination will be protected from victimisation or harassment.

All complaints will be treated seriously and will be dealt with promptly and efficiently and, so far as is possible, in confidence. The main aim will be to resolve the complaint so that the unwanted treatment is remedied and stopped.

Even employees who have been witness and not directly unfairly treated are encouraged to use the Organisation's Grievance Policy and Procedure to bring any unacceptable behaviour to light.

Any employee who is found to have breached the Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure will be subject to the Organisation's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed to constitute Gross Misconduct and as such may result in summary dismissal (without notice).

An employee who raises a grievance knowingly untrue or maliciously may also be subject to the Organisation's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

### **7.0 Policy History**

Last Updated: June 2019

Last Updated: July 2014

Revised by: Staffing Committee

Previous Updates: April 2008: Policy agreed by General Council; March 2008: Updated draft completed by Development Committee; ADC 1994: Policy agreed by Conference