

West Oxford Community Association

Equalities and Diversity Policy and Commitment

Purpose

This document sets out our policy in respect of equalities and diversity issues, and our commitment to promoting equalities for all people and valuing positive attitudes towards diversity in all that we do. We believe that it is right to combat any form of unfair discrimination against any individual or group from any section of our community.

The statement addresses six strands of equalities practice:

Age
Gender, including gender identity
Sexual orientation
Race
Disability
Religion or belief

All organisations have duties from legislation to:

Eliminate unlawful racial and disability discrimination
Promote equality of opportunity
Promote positive attitudes to disability
Promote good race relations between people of different ethnic origin
Consider how to eliminate harassment
Encourage the participation of people with a disability in the life of the community
Take into account gender, including gender identity issues,
Avoid age discrimination.

So, promoting equality, embracing diversity and ensuring full inclusion for people who use our services is central to our vision and values as a community association. We know that promoting equal opportunities, preventing discrimination and valuing diversity is fundamental to building strong communities.

We are committed to addressing and removing policies, processes and procedures, practices and behaviours within the Association that support discrimination or fail to promote equality.

Statement of Intent

1. West Oxford Community Association recognises that in our society power is not held equally, and that groups and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against on many grounds, including

for example, race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, class, religion, marital status, and where they live.

2. West Oxford Community Association also recognises that where direct or indirect discrimination occurs it is both morally and legally unacceptable, and is in direct contradiction of West Oxford Community Association's constitutional commitment to serve the whole community.
3. The purpose of the Equalities and Diversity Policy and Commitment is to set out clearly and fully the positive action West Oxford Community Association intends to take to combat direct and indirect discrimination in employment policy, management of the organisation, and the services it provides to community organisations and in its relationships with other bodies and individuals.
4. In adopting this Policy and Commitment, West Oxford Community Association is also making an unequivocal commitment to implementing it, with the aim of ensuring that equal opportunities becomes a reality.
5. West Oxford Community Association also commits itself to encouraging groups using of the community centre to adopt an equalities and diversity policy and to supporting and assisting them in the process.

Code of Conduct

We aim to treat all people with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

We aim at all times to value and respect people's feelings.

We aim to be an organisation that has inclusive recruitment and retention practices.

Our Priorities

We aim to create an association that is inclusive and promotes diversity and equality throughout its activities and organisation.

We aim to create attitudes and a culture within the association that encourages all members to challenge any language, attitude or action, that may cause offence or discrimination, or that is derogatory racist or sexist.

We will challenge any harassment, abuse or intimidation of any person. Any such incident will be taken seriously and if the individual does not accept that the challenge is valid and recognise it was wrong, and apologise, then that person will be suspended from membership of the association until such time as he or she can appear before the Management Committee in accordance with section 7 of the constitution.

If the incident involves a member of staff, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined in the conditions of service.

To support this code of conduct:

We will provide training opportunities directly or indirectly for staff and committee members to enable them to be confident in challenging bad practice and recognising the benefits of promoting diversity and equality in all situations.

We will ensure that those responsible for recruiting staff are fully aware of good recruitment practice, seeking to positively promote diversity and equality, including appropriate advertising of vacancies, suitable standards for application forms, short-listing & interviewing, monitoring the diversity of applicants, taking up references, checking their entitlement to work and appropriate, up to date person specifications for each post.

We will seek to increase the accessibility information for people who use our services.

We will undertake audits to ensure our building is accessible, and remains accessible for all staff and people who use our building.

We will seek to maximise opportunities to listen to and learn from the experiences of people who use our services.

Action Plan

1. Display the Community Association EO Statement (not the policy) in a prominent position.
2. Consider the implications of the policy and statement with management committee and staff with further training if considered necessary.
3. Find and display positive images of the diversity of life in West Oxford.
4. Agree a process for challenging discriminatory comments / behaviour.
5. Agree a process for disciplining Association members and staff following policies and procedures outlined in the draft Constitution and conditions of service.
6. Undertake an audit at regular intervals to ensure that the building remains accessible for Centre users (eg no un-necessary obstructions, clear signing, and general positive approach from Committee members and staff.)
7. Encourage under-represented groups to use the Centre and to come to mainstream events.

Policy and Action Plan Agreed by WOCA Committee 28/4/08

Implementation of Action Plan considered 2/6/08

