

The Eternal Forest Trust Equal Opportunities Policy

The Eternal Forest Trust has adopted an equal opportunities policy for the following reasons:

- It is a fundamental principle of our ethos.
- It ensures as far as possible that there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination.
- It enables the EFT to place equality of opportunity into its aims, objectives and work plans.

The Eternal Forest Trust is an equal opportunity employer. It is committed to ensuring equal opportunities, fairness of treatment, dignity, work-life balance and the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the workplace for all staff, volunteers, contractors and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. Therefore, the EFT has adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

A key objective of the policy is so that the employer can provide a working environment in which people feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated with respect and dignity.

It is the employer's stated policy to treat people equally and fairly irrespective of their sex, marital status, civil partnership status, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, culture, religion, religious belief, age, or disability.

Discrimination by or against someone connected with the EFT is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

The Protected Characteristics

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

Direct discrimination

Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination is generally an obvious and easily identifiable form of discrimination.

Discrimination by association

Discrimination by association applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception discrimination

Perception discrimination applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, and sex. 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 applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, disability and gender reassignment. Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business, i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision you make in running your business or organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful. Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that you've looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision you make.

Dignity at Work Policy

It is in everyone's interests for the environment in which we work to be harmonious and respectful. Although we would like to think that this is always the case, this policy recognises that inappropriate behaviour, which may include harassment, can and does take place. This policy aims to ensure that, if inappropriate behaviour does occur in the workplace, it is dealt with in a serious, sensitive and confidential manner so that the matter can be resolved as quickly as possible for all concerned. The Eternal Forest Trust is committed to tackling incidents of inappropriate behaviour swiftly and decisively. A strong stand is needed on this issue to enable people of all backgrounds to have dignity at work, and enable them to progress and to fully contribute to our success. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

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".

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be 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. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can include verbal behaviour such as inappropriate and unwelcome sexual comments, suggestions, jokes or pressure for sexual favours, non-verbal behaviour such as suggestive looks or leering and physical behaviour such as touching, squeezes or hugs, or repeatedly brushing against someone's body. These types of behaviour are sexual harassment when:

- they are part of a manager's decision to hire or dismiss;
- they are used to make any other employment decisions like pay increases, promotion or job assignments;
- they create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment does not refer to casual conversation or compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behaviour which is not welcome and which is personally offensive, interfering with an individual's effectiveness in the workplace or creating discomfort. If you are uncertain about whether certain sexually oriented behaviour is sexual harassment, think about whether you feel this behaviour would be inappropriate or uncomfortable for members of your family to see or be subjected to. If you do, then the behaviour may be perceived as sexual harassment.

Harassment by others

Harassment by others applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Equality Act makes you potentially liable for harassment of your employees by people who are not employees of your company, such as customers or clients. You may be liable when you are aware that harassment has taken place and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Preventing Harassment

We all have a responsibility to discourage harassment and prevent it from taking place by:

- being aware of the problems that harassment can cause, and ensuring that our behaviour does not cause others to feel harassed
- making our colleagues aware that certain conduct or behaviour is causing concern or offence to ourselves or to others.

Trustees have a particular responsibility to prevent harassment taking place by:

- being alert to the possibility that harassment may be happening in their area
- using their judgement to correct behaviour that could be considered offensive, and reminding employees of Company policy on this matter
- taking prompt action to stop harassment as soon as it is identified
- dealing with all incidents quickly, seriously, sensitively and in confidence.

Dealing with Harassment and/or Bullying

We will deal with all complaints of harassment promptly, fairly, sensitively and in confidence.

Wherever possible, the emphasis should be on resolving issues of harassment and bullying informally without resorting to the formal procedure. However, if you are being harassed or bullied, it is important that you keep a record of all alleged instances as soon as practicably possible after the incident has taken place. You should make detailed notes of any alleged instances of harassment or bullying and keep them. The notes should be signed and dated and contain the following:

- date, time and place of the incident(s)
- name of the person(s) carrying out the harassment/bullying
- full details of what actually happened and what was said
- names of any witnesses
- any other relevant information.

Most people who complain that they are being harassed simply want the behaviour to stop. Where appropriate, they can be encouraged to take charge of the situation themselves by informing the harasser that his or her behaviour is unacceptable and that it must stop.

If you feel that you are unable to deal with a particular situation without support, you should ask the Trustees to explain to the person causing offence that his/her behaviour is unwelcome and must stop.

Whichever approach is used to confront the person(s) concerned, you should record the action taken and the outcome as evidence of your attempt to deal with the situation.

If this initial approach fails to resolve the problem, you may use the formal grievance procedure. Disciplinary action will be considered in all cases where a claim of harassment is upheld.

If the complaint is not upheld, there may still be a need to consider whether you and the individual who is the subject of the complaint can continue to work effectively in your respective roles as a consequence of the complaint having been made.

Management action, whether or not the complaint is upheld, may include:

- monitoring the situation for a defined period of time;
- counselling and/or training as appropriate to the circumstances;
- delaying either or both parties returning to work where suspended until all appropriate arrangements are in place.

False Allegations of Harassment or Bullying

If it is concluded that your complaint of inappropriate behaviour was not in the public interest, your actions may be treated as having been made with malicious intent (if it can be established that it was not in good faith) and will be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Where it is concluded that the false allegation was based on a genuine, but mistaken, belief, you will be advised of the potentially serious nature of the mistake and of the need to avoid the same situation arising in future.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality 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. A complainant will not need to compare their treatment with that of a person who has not made or supported a claim under the Act.

Equal Opportunities Principles

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the policy. However, any staff have regulated responsibility for the practical use and implementation of the policy. The Eternal Forest Trust is committed to a programme of action to implement the policy in all aspects of its work, recruitment and publicity. The Trustees will ensure that a review of the policy and its implementation takes place annually.

The Trustees will ensure that all employees are aware of the Equal Opportunities Policy and their responsibility for implementing it, and that all staff having direct contact with the public or having supervisory duties will have undertaken training in Equal Opportunities.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.

Employees will be expected to conduct themselves in a proper manner whilst engaged in business for and on behalf of the organisation. Those who act contrary to the letter or spirit of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as having committed a serious disciplinary offence and may render themselves liable to summary dismissal. A copy of the Disciplinary and Grievance procedures will be issued to all employees. The implications of the above will be outlined to staff in the induction period.

The Eternal Forest Trust recognises that the standard terms and conditions of employment and normal working hours may disadvantage certain applicants/employees and will develop work practices, subject to the needs of the organisation, to accommodate the needs of such employees. These will include job share, flexible working days, and flexible working time and a positive approach to family friendly working.

It is intended that proper access and facilities for people with disabilities be provided at premises used by the organization and that efforts are made to ensure that special needs are met including the provision of adapted equipment and changes of working practices.

We will adopt a minimum wage, below which no paid employee remuneration will be set.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, customers, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and former staff members.

The employer is also committed to ensuring that no policy, procedure, provision, rule, requirement, condition or criterion will be imposed on any worker or job applicant without justification if it would be likely to put that person at a disadvantage on any of the above grounds.

This Equal Opportunities policy applies to all stages of the recruitment and selection process, as well as throughout individuals' employment. All staff who have responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion, or who supervise other staff, will receive equal opportunities training. Other staff will have the opportunity to attend awareness training in equality and the avoidance of discrimination.

The organisation will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives and as part of this process will monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of staff.

If you or any other employee feels the letter or general intent of the policy is breached, please report it to your manager. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily you may raise a grievance with the trustees / manager / ANBG if the breach involves a trustee.

Training in Relation to our Equal Opportunities Policy

The Eternal Forest Trust will ensure that all people involved in the staff selection process will receive Equal Opportunities training related to selection and recruitment. All employees involved with management, supervisory or personnel functions will be given Equal Opportunities training.

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be included in all training courses, where appropriate, e.g. induction, appraisal, communication skills, supervisory/management development courses.

All employees who come into contact with job applicants and members of the public will be given Equal Opportunities training.

Trustees, interested members and volunteers should be offered the opportunity to undertake Equal Opportunities training.

Equal Opportunities in Recruitment and Selection

All posts will be publicly advertised, with the object of encouraging applications from as wide a cross section of the public as possible.

Advertisements should contain a standard Equal Opportunities statement e.g. "The Eternal Forest Trust is an equal opportunities service provider."

Advertisements should not be worded to suggest requirements that are unnecessary for the job and should be worded in a clear and unambiguous way so that candidates can assess their own suitability.

The same people will, as far as possible, be involved in the short listing and interviewing of applicants and efforts will be made to ensure a balance of representation on the interviewing panel.

All panel members will undergo Equal Opportunities training relating to selection and recruitment to ensure that selection is made on an objective basis.

Interview settings and procedures will be organised so as to minimise discomfort or disadvantage on the part of any applicant. Appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure access to the interview for people with disabilities and family commitments.

Acceptance of the principle and practical implementation of Equal Opportunities employment practice and service provision will be a condition of employment.

All candidates will be interviewed on their ability to further the objectives of the Equal Opportunities Policy and an applicant's expressed opposition to any aspect of it will represent sufficient grounds for non-selection. All promotion opportunities will be advertised within the organization initially and if no suitable candidate applies the

post will be advertised externally. (The guidelines in this section of the policy shall not be applicable concerning a direct promotion of an employee).

Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

To support equal opportunities in Recruitment and Selection, before a post is advertised, a job description and person specification will be drawn up or reviewed if the post already exists. The criteria used in the specification will be strictly relevant to the attributes that a person needs for the job. These will not be unnecessarily restrictive; so as to exclude particular groups as this would constitute unfair indirect discrimination.

These specifications will be used for short listing purposes and later selection.

Criteria for short listing will be derived from the job description and person specification and will be applied to all applicants. The same people will be involved in the short listing and interviewing of applicants.

Unsuccessful interviewees will be notified in writing as soon as possible and will be informed that someone will be designated to provide feedback to them if required.

- All job descriptions and subsequent person specifications should include an Equal Opportunities aspect (e.g. these duties must at all times be carried out in compliance with the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy).
- Prior to writing an advertisement, full-time posts should be assessed to see whether they are suitable for job-share, and if so, should be advertised as such.
- All posts should be open to job share unless a case is upheld that job-share would not work.
- Candidates will be invited to contact the organisation for details of the post to be filled stating where they saw the advertisement. CVs will not be requested at this stage, as candidates will not yet be aware of the full job or person specification.
- When they respond to enquiries, each candidate will be sent a job pack consisting minimally of job description and person specification, an application form, a copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy and an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (gender, ethnic origin, age, disability, marital status and source of advertisement).
- Application forms should be agreed by the Trustees / Managers and will only request information that is strictly relevant to the post.
- CVs will be requested if deemed applicable to the skills required of the post.
- Further information will be sent to short listed candidates including arrangements for interview and directions to the location.

Service Delivery: Guidelines

We will ensure equality of opportunity in our service provision by:

- Applying the principles of equality when setting our priorities.
- Maintaining data and initiating research that will enable services to be prioritised from primary information.

- Using accessible venues and times for all service delivery.
- Timing meetings, events, training courses in a family friendly way.
- Where possible organising meetings, events etc. within easy access of community need.

Equality & Diversity

Using fair, objective and innovative employment practices, our aim is to ensure that:

- All employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.
- All employees have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour, whether based on sex, trans-gender status, marital status, civil partnership status, pregnancy, race, disability, age, political or religious belief or sexuality.
- All employees have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair discrimination.
 - The diversity of the communities we serve is reflected at all levels within our workforce.

Cultural Diversity Strategy

Aims & Objectives

- to increase volunteers', members' and trustees' awareness and knowledge of the different cultural communities in the surrounding areas.
- to increase understanding of cultural diversity and its benefits to local communities.

Action Plan

- Welsh language embedded into work and communications as far as practicable
- to promote equality of opportunity to those in minority communities.
- to employ minority staff.

Policy Development

To reach our objectives we will increase consultation with communities, use alternative marketing strategies, train staff and continually monitor and evaluate our cultural strategy.

Date approved: 13/11/21

Date of next review: November 2022

Person responsible: _____ signed

Print name: Berni Cavanagh

