

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 At Worcestershire Wildlife Trust we believe that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are central to enabling our organisation to reflect the communities we serve in our county and to ensuring that we can attract people of all backgrounds, abilities and identities to engage with us as employees, trustees, volunteers, members, supporters and visitors. This EDI Policy is a public statement of our objectives and approach. The policy has been developed to ensure that we meet the requirements of [The Equality Act 2010](#) and that we follow the [Charity Governance Code](#). However, our approach goes far beyond mere compliance – we recognise the many benefits that arise from having a more diverse and inclusive organisation and we aim to make our commitment to EDI visible in our actions and in our communications.

2. Definitions

2.1 Equality: Equality is about ensuring that people are treated fairly and have the same access to opportunities and services as everyone else. We realise an individual's needs are sometimes best met in different ways but people must not be unfairly discriminated against.

2.2 Diversity: Diversity refers to the differences that exist between each of us and recognising the value of those differences. Diversity is about valuing different identities, knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences, and using these differences to create an effective and innovative community to increase our effectiveness as an organisation.

2.3 Inclusion: Inclusion means being proactive in making sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate. It is not only about creating a diverse environment but also about making sure that a culture exists where individuals can be their authentic selves without feeling the need to hide aspects of their lives.

2.4 Further potentially helpful definitions can be found in the annex to this document.

3. The Equality Act 2010

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 is the equalities legislation which protects people from unfair discrimination on the grounds of nine protected characteristics: age, disability,

gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3.2 Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is fully committed to abiding by the requirements of the Act. The Trust also recognises that people should not be categorised due to their possessing one or more protected characteristics, and people with the same protected characteristic may differ in their perspectives and in their needs. In addition to preventing discrimination on the ground of protected characteristics, the Trust also aims to tackle the lack of equal opportunity and access arising from geographical and social inequalities.

4. EDI and our Council

4.1 Charitable boards make better decisions when their members understand the full range of perspectives and experiences from across the communities they serve. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Council will strive to improve, and then maintain, diversity on the board. It will implement inclusive practices, especially with regard to the way the board recruits and operates, and Trustees will act as positive role models, behaving in ways that promote a respectful and inclusive organisational culture. The Council will appoint a Trustee with responsibility for EDI and will collectively review and approve the EDI Policy and the EDI three-year operational plans. The Trustee with the lead for EDI will provide a progress report to the Council on an annual basis.

5. EDI and our staff

5.1 Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment, including fair employment practice and equal pay policy. We embrace an organisational culture of fairness and openness in the performance of our duties.

5.2 Our recruitment policy is reviewed at least every three years and is designed to:

5.2.1 Promote opportunities to ensure our workforce is diverse and representative of the local community.

5.2.2 Ensure jobs are accessible to people from all sections of our community.

5.2.3 Ensure all applicants for posts are aware of our EDI policy and of their right to be treated with dignity and respect.

5.3 Our working practices:

5.3.1 Ensure employees are treated equitably in all areas of employment, including career development, pay, training and promotion.

5.3.2 Require all employees to undertake EDI training.

5.3.3 Prevent harassment and bullying while at work.

5.3.4 Contain provision to make whistleblowing straightforward and anonymous.

5.3.5 Promote employee well-being and the achievement of a good work-life balance.

6. EDI and our volunteers

6.1 Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion among our volunteers whose contributions are a vital component in the Trust being able to achieve its objectives.

6.2 Our volunteering policy is reviewed at least every three years and is designed to:

6.2.1 Encourage and support diversity among our volunteer cadre.

6.2.2 Ensure that volunteering opportunities are open to anyone who wishes to help (provided that safeguarding, supervisory support and insurance requirements can be met).

6.2.3 Ensure that anyone who applies to be a volunteer is aware of our EDI policy and understands that they have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

6.3 Our working practices:

6.3.1 Ensure that volunteers are treated with dignity and respect, and are protected from harassment or bullying while engaged in Trust activities, including by fellow volunteers.

6.3.2 Ensure all new and current volunteer opportunities are assessed to make sure there are no addressable barriers to entry.

6.3.3 Require that all volunteers undertake EDI training and are subsequently supported in their continued EDI-related learning.

6.3.4 Include provision for volunteers to report infractions of EDI policy or practice in a straightforward, anonymous way.

7. EDI and our members, supporters and visitors

7.1 Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our members, supporters and visitors. We want these groups to be representative of all sections of our community and will seek to improve our understanding of their various needs through our engagement activities. We want everyone to have access to our facilities, events and activities and to feel welcome, valued and able to participate fully.

Approved by Council 17th October 2022

ANNEX: ADDITIONAL EDI-RELATED DEFINITIONS

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated differently and less favourably simply because of who they are. This type of discrimination is unlawful if the basis for the difference in treatment is due to one or more protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage of civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation). For example, if a female employee were passed over for promotion and a less experienced, less qualified male colleague were offered the position instead, this would be direct sex discrimination.

Discrimination by association

This is a form of discrimination which occurs when one person has a protected characteristic but another person is treated negatively because of their connection to them. For example, an employee has been promised a promotion at work. Subsequently, the employee mentions in conversation with their manager that their child has a disability. On learning this, the manager withdraws the promotion offer because of a belief that the employee would be unable to commit fully to the new role because of their caring responsibilities. This would be associative discrimination because of the employee's association with someone who is disabled.

Discrimination by perception

This refers to discrimination because you believe a person has a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually have that characteristic. For example, if an employer rejected a job application from a white person who they wrongly thought was black because the applicant had a surname that sounded African, this would be perceptive discrimination on the basis of race.

Indirect discrimination

This occurs when a rule or policy is applied in the same way for everyone but it disadvantages a group of people who share a protected characteristic. For example, an organisation requires that everyone apply for a role or a service solely via the internet. This could exclude older adults who may not have internet access or the requisite computer skills.

Positive action

This refers to specific steps that can be taken to improve the balance of the makeup of an organisation. For example, an organisation may wish to employ more disabled people or people from minority ethnic communities to improve the diversity of its workforce. It is not lawful to practice positive discrimination i.e. you cannot appoint a

candidate from an underrepresented group without their meeting the skills requirements for the role, and candidates who are better qualified cannot be passed over. However, to encourage people from protected groups to apply for roles, adverts may be placed to target these groups and may include statements such as 'we particularly welcome applicants from disabled and black and minority ethnic candidates as these groups are currently under-represented within our workforce'. If a decision has to be made between appointing two equally qualified and suitable candidates, it is lawful to use positive action to choose the candidate that possesses the specific characteristic you are seeking.