

Skills & Volunteering Cymru (SVC)



Equal Opportunities Policy

Reviewed April 2020

	Equal Opportunities Policy
1.0	Introduction
1.1	Skills & Volunteering Cymru (SVC) is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all staff, volunteers and beneficiaries.
2.0	Scope of the Policy
2.1	This policy applies to everyone involved with SVC, including the staff who support SVC, the SVC Board of Trustees, SVC volunteers and SVC beneficiaries.
2.2	It is hoped that all your questions relating to this policy have been clearly answered. If you have questions which remain unanswered, then please refer to the SVC manager or the SVC Board of Trustees.
3.0	The Equality Act 2010
3.1	<p>The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.</p> <p>It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions, work, education, associations and transport • changing the definition of gender reassignment, by removing the requirement for medical supervision • providing protection for people discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic • clearer protection for breastfeeding mothers • applying a uniform definition of indirect discrimination to all protected characteristics • harmonising provisions allowing voluntary positive action
3.2	Protected Characteristics
3.3	<p>The Equality Act has specified 9 areas that are termed in the legislation as protected characteristics. These include (in no particular order):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age 2. Sex 3. Race 4. Disability 5. Pregnancy 6. Marital status

	<p>7. Sexual orientation. 8. Gender reassignment 9. Religious background</p> <p>Discriminating against workers because of any of the nine characteristics is against the law.</p>
4.0 What is discrimination?	
4.1	<p>Discrimination</p> <p>Discrimination occurs in different ways, some are more obvious than others. Discrimination on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics is prohibited by law, even if unintentional, unless a particular exception applies.</p>
	<p>Direct Discrimination</p> <p>Is less favourable treatment because of one of the Protected Characteristics. Direct Discrimination can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess the Protected Characteristic, but is perceived to have it, or associate with people who have it.</p>
	<p>Indirect Discrimination</p> <p>Arises when an organisation places an apparently neutral provision, criteria or practice, which in fact puts individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic at a disadvantage, and this is unjustified. To show discrimination, the individual complaining must be personally disadvantaged. This type of discrimination is unlawful, unless it is proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim.</p>
	<p>Victimisation</p> <p>Means treating a person less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination, or have provided information in connection with a complaint, or because they might do one of these things.</p>
	<p>Harassment</p> <p>Unwanted conduct which is related to a Protected Characteristic, and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them.</p> <p>Or, unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature.</p>
	<p>Disability Discrimination</p> <p>This could be direct, or indirect discrimination, and is any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.</p>
5.0 Policy	
5.1	SVC will not intentionally discriminate in employment, recruitment or service delivery.
5.2	When recruiting volunteers, staff or supporting beneficiaries, SVC will ensure we advertise our vacancies and publicise our services effectively, to ensure we are not excluding people who do not have ready access to sources of information. We will also look at our existing volunteer base to ensure, as far as possible, it reflects the community

	we serve. If it does not, we risk creating an internal culture which is biased towards one particular view of society and which prevents us from delivering services that are truly sensitive to the needs of people from different backgrounds.
5.3	At SVC we aim to create an organisational culture that values differences.
5.4	This policy does not seek to prescribe behaviour which is acceptable, or to list types of behaviour which are unacceptable. Instead it tries to set out some guiding principles and to give recognition to groups who may suffer as the result of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination
5.5	<p>Principles</p> <p>In offering and providing services, SVC will consider only the needs of the beneficiary, the resources available and any statutory or contractual restrictions. We will not make judgements about the culture or lifestyle of the beneficiary or their family. In particular, subject to appropriate risk assessment and the rights of staff and volunteers, we will respect the right of the beneficiary to control their own lives and will not seek to impose views of how people should live or what choices they should make.</p> <p>In recruitment and selection (of both staff and volunteers), we will consider only the relevant skills, attributes and experience of the applicant and the requirements of the post. We will not make judgements based on stereotypes of particular population groups, nor on the characteristics of the existing staff/volunteer base. Selection will be made on merit, which can be defined as the measurable ability of the applicant to do the work in question.</p> <p>We will monitor our staff, volunteers and client base to gauge whether they are representative of the population in the area we serve. Where there is a significant imbalance we will adopt measures, which will in the long term, serve to reduce the imbalance.</p> <p>In particular, we will ensure that in our dealings with the public whether at an individual level or through advertising and publicity, we present an image that not deliberately or inadvertently, exclude or inhibit any section of the population. We will try to use inclusive images and language to reach as wide a cross-section of the public within our limited resources.</p> <p>We will endeavour to make SVC a comfortable and welcoming place for everyone to work, by adopting specific policies to deal with recognised areas of conflict and difficulty and by avoiding the use of derogatory or intimidating language and behaviour.</p>
5.6	Reasonable Adjustments

	<p>As a provider of services to disabled people we will undertake whatever measures we can to accommodate and support people with disabilities in our staff and/or volunteer base.</p>
<p>5.7</p>	<p>Harassment</p> <p>Harassment in the workplace or in situations associated with work can result in workplace tension, personal distress, stress, reduced productivity, mental illness and the inability to work. In extreme cases it has been known to lead to suicide. SVC will not tolerate harassment of the staff that support SVC, SVC Trustees, SVC volunteers or SVC beneficiaries. Cases of harassment will be dealt with promptly and effectively.</p> <p>Full details can be viewed in SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure.</p> <p>Staff should also refer to Innovate Trust's Grievance Policy (as the employers of SVC staff).</p>
<p>5.8</p>	<p>What to do if you Encounter Discrimination</p> <p>If you believe you have been a victim of discrimination you should follow SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure (SVC staff should also refer to Innovate Trust's Grievance Procedure – as the employers of SVC staff).</p> <p>Anyone who raises a complaint about, or report discrimination in good faith, will be protected from retaliation and victimisation.</p>
<p>5.9</p>	<p>Responsibility for Equality Issues</p> <p>It is the responsibility of every member of SVC staff, the Board of Trustees and volunteers to apply the principles of equality, the guidance given in any policies relating to equal opportunities, the law and good practice to their activities within SVC.</p>