Skills & Volunteering Cymru (SVC)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

August 2021

	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
1.0	**Introduction**
1.1	Skills & Volunteering Cymru (SVC) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion for all staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries, and eliminating unlawful discrimination in all of its practices and activities. SVC aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect.
2.0	**Scope of Policy**
2.1	This policy applies to everyone involved with SVC, including the staff who support SVC, the SVC Board of Trustees and SVC volunteers.
3.0	**Policy Statement**
3.1	SVC's aim is to be truly representative of all sections of society and our staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries, and for each member of the SVC community to feel respected and able to give their best.
3.2	This policy sets out how SVC will achieve this by: − **Describing our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion at SVC** *- Section 5-6* − **Explaining how SVC will monitor equality, diversity and inclusion** *-Section 7* − **Explaining how SVC will strive for fairness in our recruitment processes** *- Section 8* − **Outlining the roles and responsibilities of SVC staff, Trustees and volunteers with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion** *- Section 9* − **Outlining our commitment to training for staff, volunteers and Trustees** *- Section 10* − **Explaining what staff, volunteers or Trustees should do if they have concerns** *- Section 11* SVC will monitor 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. SVC is committed against unlawful discrimination in employment, recruitment or service delivery. This policy does not seek to prescribe behaviour which is acceptable, or to list types of behaviour which are unacceptable. Instead, it aims to set out some

	guiding principles and to acknowledge and protect those from minority groups who often experience prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination disproportionately.
4.0	**Purpose**
4.1	This policy builds upon the foundation of equality legislation and anti-discrimination guidance and strives, not only to comply with legal requirements, but to use these to ensure that SVC endeavours to exemplify best practice.

SVC values diversity and recognises that the charity is greatly enhanced by the disparate range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within its staff, trustees, volunteer and beneficiary populations.

SVC aims to embrace diversity in all of its activities and proudly acknowledges that variety and difference are intrinsic to the wellbeing and future development of SVC.

This is an over-arching policy designed to outline the fundamental principles of SVC's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and will be supported by specific equality policies and action plans.

SVC will provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.

SVC will not unlawfully discriminate against any of Equality Act 2010's protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. |
| **5.0** | **Commitment** |
| **5.1** | The organisation commits to:

Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries are recognised and valued.

Training SVC staff, volunteers and trustees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment and volunteering, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under both SVC's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures and where appropriate Innovate Trust's associated policies and procedures.

Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation. |

	Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
	Ensure that as a provider of services to people with disabilities we will undertake whatever measures we can to accommodate and support people with disabilities in our staff, trustees and/or volunteer base.
	All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and the public.
	SVC commits to recruiting diverse volunteers, board and staff. We recognise that we may not always have a representative SVC community, but we are committed to working proactively to create a more diverse SVC community. Our approach to diversifying the SVC community includes, but is not limited to positive action.
6.0	**Legislative Background**
6.1	**Equal Opportunities**
6.2	The UK has always strived to promote equality in the workplace. Through the years there have been different statutory bodies that dealt with specific aspects of discrimination. The Equal Opportunities Commission was established to tackle the issue of sex discrimination. The Disability Rights Commission focused on issues related to disability discrimination and the Commission for Racial Equality dealt with race discrimination. In October 2007 these three commissions were merged into the new body called the **Equality and Human Rights Commission**. In addition to taking on the responsibilities of the three existing commissions, the EHRC also acquired new responsibilities in order to provide the same level of protection to all other minority groups. The primary aim of the Equality and Human Rights Commission is to promote and protect everyone's right to equal opportunities in the workplace as laid down in the **Equality Act 2010**. For further information, please see appendix.
6.3	**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
6.4	For further information regarding equality, diversity, inclusion, please see appendix for definitions.
7.0	**Monitoring**
7.1	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. We will monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in

	encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy. It is SVC's policy to monitor equality and diversity across all aspects of its activity. This includes: • The admission and recruitment of staff, volunteers and where possible, beneficiaries. • The number and nature of complaints, grievances and disciplinary actions. • The resignations and withdrawal rates of staff, and where possible volunteers and beneficiaries. Monitoring in this way will reveal whether particular groups experience disadvantage and whether they receive fair and equitable treatment in relation to either their employment or their use of our organisation. Where unfair practices are discovered through the monitoring process, necessary action will be taken to remedy the disadvantage.
8.0	**Recruitment**
8.1	In recruitment and selection (of staff, trustees 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, trustee and volunteer base. Selection will be made on merit, which can be defined as the measurable ability of the applicant to do the role in question. 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. 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.
9.0	**Roles and Responsibilities**
9.1	All persons at all levels have certain responsibilities. Good relations and practice and the achievement of an inclusive community depend on all members of our organisation treating their fellow members with respect and dignity. Therefore, all persons are expected to: 1. Co-operate with measures to advance equality and diversity and to eliminate unlawful discrimination. 2. Treat all members of staff in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, respecting differences. 3. Not discriminating where such members might have power over others. 4. Not inciting or attempt to induce others to behave in discriminatory ways. 5. Not victimising or attempt to victimise anyone who has made complaints of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or abuse or who has provided information on discrimination. 6. Eliminate harassment abuse or intimidation of others on the grounds of race or ethnicity, for example in attempts to discourage them from applying for vacancies or volunteering opportunities within the organisation.

	7. Inform an appropriate person if a form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation is taking place. 8. Take appropriate action where they are informed that an act or acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation have occurred. The SVC Board of Trustees and the SVC Manager are accountable for ensuring the policy is implemented.
9.2	<u>Role of the SVC Manager</u> • Set a positive example by ensuring that their actions and behaviours promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). • Stop inappropriate behaviour as soon as they become aware of it. • Support and implement action that SVC takes to improve diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities, where that action has been agreed as national policy. • Encourage employees to maximise their contribution to the work of SVC and support them to reach their full potential. • Provide appropriate learning opportunities to staff and volunteers in order to put the EDI policy into practice. • Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of and carry out their responsibilities under the law and this policy. • Work alongside the EDI Officer and EDI Committee to ensure EDI development is always at the forefront of the organisation.
9.3	<u>Role of the SVC Staff Team</u> • Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others. • Challenge and report any behaviour that could be interpreted as discriminatory. • Understand what is expected of them in terms of their performance, their behaviour and their conduct towards others. • Set a positive example at all times. • Listen to and respect others and discourage discriminatory speculations. • Challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as unfair discrimination. • Sharing EDI resources with the SVC community.
9.4	<u>Role of Volunteers</u> • Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others. • Attend appropriate training provided by SVC regarding EDI issues. • Not discriminate unfairly against beneficiaries when giving help and support, or other members of the organisation. • Challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as unfair discrimination. • Listen to and respect others and discourage discriminatory speculations and behaviour.
9.5	<u>Role of Trustees</u> • Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others. • Attend appropriate training provided by SVC regarding EDI issues. • Challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as unfair discrimination. • Listen to and respect others and discourage discriminatory speculations and behaviour. • Ensure EDI is covered as an agenda item at every trustee meeting. • Ensure EDI targets form part of SVC's strategic plan and that these targets are regularly reviewed.
9.6	<u>Role of the EDI Committee</u> • To support and further develop an embedded culture of inclusivity at SVC that actively promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in our teams,

	activities and decisions. This is in respect of, but not limited to the nine protected characteristics.
	• Ensures that everyone involved with SVC has access to inclusive services.
	• Leads a standing agenda point on the SVC Board regarding an update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within SVC.
	• Promotes initiatives, campaigns and local, national and international policy changes and development within SVC and the wider community.
	• Works with the staff team to assess different community needs and promote community cohesion.
	• Interacting with the Board, staff teams, volunteers and community organisations to promote an intersectional approach to equality, diversity and inclusion at SVC.
	• Researching, applying and promoting diversity initiatives and sharing best practice.
	• Supporting and educating SVC beneficiary groups about equality, diversity and inclusion.
	• With the support of the SVC Manager, and fellow Trustees - write, implement and review policy including equality impact assess any significant changes for impact.
	• Engage and develop relationships with local EDI groups and organisations to inform the future work of SVC.
10.0	**Training**
10.1	SVC will continue to strive to provide a variety of training and training resources for the SVC community regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
11.0	**What to do if you encounter discrimination?**
11.1	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).
	This process additionally applies to applicants who have been unsuccessful - staff, trustees or volunteers.
	Anyone who raises a complaint about, or report discrimination in good faith, will be protected from retaliation and victimisation.
12.0	**Harassment**
12.1	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 SVC staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries. Cases of harassment will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
12.2	Full details can be viewed in SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure.
12.3	Staff should also refer to Innovate Trust's Grievance Policy (as the employers of SVC staff).
13.0	**Breach of Policy**
13.1	All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated and, if proven, will result in appropriate action for the perpetrator. Any staff, trustees or volunteers found to be in breach of this policy could be subject to disciplinary action and/or their continued engagement with SVC should be questioned.
14.0	**Communication**

14.1	This policy will be communicated widely within the organisation to all staff, trustees and volunteers and also made available on Moodle and the SVC website.
15.0	**Confidentiality**
15.1	Any information disclosed to SVC in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion issues will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with legislative requirements.
16.0	**Strategic Plan**
16.1	This policy links to SVC's Strategic Plan. For a copy of our strategic plan please email info@svcymru.org **Speak to the EDI Committee about linking to strategic plan.**
17.0	**Further Support**
17.1	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 SVC manager, SVC EDI officer, or the SVC Board of Trustees.
18.0	**Related Policies**
18.1	The staff who support SVC should also refer to Innovate Trust's policies and procedures as the employers of SVC staff. This policy is linked to: • SVC's Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders as Volunteers • SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure • SVC's Volunteering Policy • SVC's Zero Tolerance Policy to Racism Further information can be found on the policies and procedures section of SVC's website: https://www.svcymru.org/pages/policies-and-procedures

	Appendix
1.0	**Sources of Further Guidance**
1.1	Equality Act 2010
1.2	Human Rights Act 1998
1.3	Equality & Human Rights Commission
1.4	ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)
1.5	Equality Challenge Unit
2.0	**Definition of Equal Opportunities (Under The Equality Act 2010)**
2.1	'The term "equal opportunities" upholds the idea that all workers within an organisation should be entitled to and have access to all of the organisations facilities at every stage of employment, including the pre-employment phase. This means every individual should have: • An equal chance to apply and be selected for posts pre-employment • An equal chance to be trained and promoted while employed with the organisation • An equal chance to have their employment terminated equally and fairly'
3.0	**The Equality Act 2010**
3.1	The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. 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. • 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.
4.0	**Protected Characteristics**
4.1	The Equality Act has specified nine areas that are termed in the legislation as protected characteristics. These include (in no particular order): 1. Age 2. Sex

		3. Race
		4. Disability
		5. Pregnancy
		6. Marital status
		7. Sexual orientation.
		8. Gender reassignment
		9. Religious background
		Discriminating against workers because of any of the nine characteristics is against the law.
5.0	**What is discrimination?**	
5.1	Discrimination	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.
5.2	Direct Discrimination	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.
5.3	Indirect Discrimination	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.
5.4	Victimisation	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.
5.6	Harassment	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. Or, unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature.
5.7	Disability Discrimination	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.
6.0	**Equality**	
6.1	Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.	
	It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.	
	Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination.	

7.0	**Diversity**	
7.1	Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. In a nutshell, it's about empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin. Diversity allows for the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It means understanding one another by surpassing simple tolerance to ensure people truly value their differences. This allows us to embrace and also to celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual and place positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce. Each individual in an organisation brings with them a diverse set of perspectives, work and life experiences, as well as religious and cultural differences. The power of diversity can only be unleashed and its benefits reaped when we recognise these differences and learn to respect and value each individual irrelevant of their background.	
8.0	**Inclusion**	
8.1	Inclusion is an organisational effort and practices in which different groups or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and welcomed, and equally treated. These differences could be self-evident, such as national origin, age, race and ethnicity, religion/belief, gender, marital status and socioeconomic status or they could be more inherent, such as educational background, training, sector experience, organisational tenure, even personality, such as introverts and extroverts. Inclusion is a sense of belonging. Inclusive cultures make people feel respected and valued for who they are as an individual or group. People feel a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that they can do their best at work. Inclusion often means a shift in an organisation's mind-set and culture that has visible effects, such as participation in meetings, how offices are physically organised or access to particular facilities or information. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes people feel valued as being essential to the success of the organisation. Evidence shows that when people feel valued, they function at full capacity and feel part of the organisation's mission. This culture shift creates higher performing organizations where motivation and morale soar.	

Date for review: August 2022