

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STATEMENT (V4FV18.08.16 – RPALCK)

Introduction

At the Trust we care passionately for our waterways, and as importantly, for those who look after and use them. We strongly believe that a diverse workforce brings with it a diversity of ideas, thinking and ways of working which enhances what we do as a Trust.

This Statement outlines the Trust's commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity for all, and how the Trust will aim to prevent, and if necessary, address any unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

This Statement applies to all of our employees, volunteers and other representatives including contractors, agency workers, and trainees.

Our Commitment

Our aim is, at all times, to care for our people, and earn the confidence, trust and advocacy of our customers, partners, and those in the communities in which we work. We pride ourselves on, and are committed to, a workplace that reflects our values, embraces diversity, and enhances our reputation as a responsible and trusted custodian of the waterways in our care.

At the heart of our values is a commitment to treat everyone with respect, so that we treat each individual as you would expect to be treated yourself.

We strive to:

- Prevent instances of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Take the required steps to accommodate others – of a different religion, culture, those who are disabled, or those with caring responsibilities
- Create a workplace in which everyone feels comfortable and can contribute fully, and can learn and enjoy what they do
- Develop ways of working which can be adapted to meet the needs of different people
- Seek new ideas, listen to feedback, and value opinions from both inside and outside of the Trust
- Treat all alleged breaches of this statement seriously, at all times, and when necessary, address all inappropriate behaviour swiftly and firmly
- Fulfil our obligations under equality legislation and associated codes of practice

We will not tolerate discrimination against anyone on the basis of –

- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Race (colour; nationality or ethnic origin)
- Disability
- Religion or belief

Age

Marital or civil partner status

Gender reassignment

Pregnancy or maternity

Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

Discrimination by or against a fellow employee, or representative of the Trust, is unacceptable, whether it is 'direct' or 'indirect', and whether it occurs intentionally or unintentionally. It occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of one of the 'protected characteristics'. For example, rejecting a job applicant on the grounds of race because the individual would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs when someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified condition, practice or policy that puts those with the same 'protected characteristic' at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time could put women at a disadvantage because, generally, they have greater childcare commitments than men.

Harassment of others - defined as unwanted, or unwarranted conduct that has the purpose of, or the impact of, violating someone's dignity - is unlawful. Victimisation is the less favourable treatment of someone who may have complained, or given information about discrimination or harassment, or who supported someone's complaint. The Trust will investigate and address any reported instances of harassment or victimisation.

What Do We Expect From All Trust Employees and Volunteers?

1. Do not ignore, or 'walk by', instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination; there are to be no innocent by-standers on 'our banks' or in our offices
2. Do not discriminate against others, treat everyone with respect, and at all times consciously consider whether words or actions could be offensive to others; the Trust will not tolerate bullying or harassment even if it is unintentional.
3. Contribute through your personal actions and behaviours to maintaining a diverse, inclusive workforce which is welcoming to and comfortable for everyone.

What Can I Expect From the Trust?

1. We will ensure equality of opportunity for everyone in relation to all that we do – in our approach to recruitment, selection, training and development, promotion, conditions of employment, pay, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and the termination of employment
2. We will seek to create a working environment that is welcoming for all at the Trust; free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation; respecting everyone's contribution; enabling everyone to make the best use of their skills, and where decisions taken are based upon capability and merit.
3. We will act to prevent any forms of direct or indirect discrimination
4. We will take steps to accommodate others of all religions and cultures, those with domestic commitments, and those who are disabled
5. We will meet our legal obligations, treating all improper conduct as misconduct under our Harassment and/or Disciplinary Policy and Procedures, which ultimately could lead to dismissal.
6. A commitment to ensure all Trust employees, and its representatives, are aware of this Statement, and their individual responsibilities.

Promoting Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity across the Trust

Recruitment and Selection

No job applicant will suffer discrimination. All candidates will be treated on the basis of their merits, skills and abilities and solely by being assessed against the requirements for the job. We will ensure that our processes do not seek to ask questions or impose criteria that relate to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment. In addition, candidates will not be asked questions relating to their health or disability prior to a job offer being made.

Training and Development, Promotions and Conditions of Service

Trust employees will be provided with access to the training they require in order to contribute fully to the success of the Trust, and perform to the best of their abilities. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. Our conditions of service, such as benefits, will be reviewed to ensure they are available to all, and that there are no unlawful or unreasonable obstacles to accessing them.

Termination of Employment

The Trust will ensure that any redundancy criteria and procedures are fair, objective and not directly or indirectly discriminatory

Conduct and Capability

We will ensure that any disciplinary sanctions are applied without discrimination

Disabilities

Anyone who is disabled, or should become disabled, is encouraged to make us aware so that we may support them wherever possible.

Complaints

At the Trust we encourage those who may have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation to raise the matter, either with their line manager, a member of the HR team or by reference to our relevant policies and procedures. All complaints will be fully investigated in a timely manner and in confidence, as far as possible. We expect any allegations to be made in good faith; vexatious allegations will be dealt with utilising our Disciplinary Policy and Procedures

Allan Leighton
Chair
July 2016

Richard Parry
Chief Executive

Status: this Policy is not intended to be contractual and the Trust reserves the right to amend it from time to time as necessary. The Trust will notify the unions of any proposed changes to the Policy at least three months before those changes are implemented.

Both the Trust and/or the recognised unions may terminate this agreement provided at least three months written notice of the intention to terminate, is provided to the other party.

July 2016