



SBBOT Governance - Policy - Equality & Diversity

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, volunteers, board and supporters and eliminating unlawful and other forms of discrimination.

Every employee, trustee, member and volunteer is entitled to a working and activities environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

We aim to be truly representative of all sections of society and for everyone involved to feel respected and able to give their best.

In providing services and facilities we are also committed to act against unlawful discrimination *against* our staff, volunteers, supporters, users and the general public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, paid or voluntary, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), social class, religion or belief
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- Create 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 are recognised and valued.
- This commitment includes training managers and all other employees and volunteers 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 prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All staff and volunteers should understand that they, as well as Thanet Urban Forest, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

(Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice, or termination of voluntary status.)

(Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.)

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, 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.
- Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 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.
- 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 the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and, when needed taking, action to address any issues.

This equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by the SBBOT Council and supersedes all previous equal opportunities policies. Any breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct that is grounds for disciplinary action.