



Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

The Cotswolds Conservation Board is committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This means treating people fairly, valuing differences and removing the barriers that prevent people from fully participating in public life and realising their full potential.

We understand and respect that people are unique and have individual differences and we celebrate this diversity and encourage positive relationships between people with differing needs.

This Policy sets out how we will make equality integral to the way we reach decisions, provide services, recruit and support our employees, work with other organisations and involve local people. Our aim is to make the Cotswolds Conservation Board a fully accessible and inclusive organisation that welcomes and respects the diversity of its customers, elected members, employees, volunteers and visitors. This Policy replaces all of the Board's previous equality schemes.

Our Legal Responsibilities

The Board will meet all legal duties in respect of equality and diversity. The key piece of legislation is the Equality Act 2010, which replaced and consolidated the raft of antidiscrimination laws with a single Act, and has implications for us as an employer and service provider.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Act contains an integrated Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires all public bodies and private bodies that deliver a public function, to consider the needs of protected groups when designing and delivering services.

Under the Act, the Board must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
- Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between different communities.

The Board will also comply with the Conventions contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to.

Our Commitment

The Cotswolds Conservation Board is committed to ensuring equality, fairness, inclusion and good relations are at the heart of everything we do - be it policy-making, service delivery or employment practice.

This is key to delivering our values, specifically **Welcoming – we are for everyone.**

To support our commitment to equality and diversity, the Board will:

- Comply with and embrace equality law and good practice, which includes carrying out our Public Sector duties to promote equality
- Regularly monitor and assess the impact of our policies, services and functions to ensure they are fair and reflect people's different needs and opinions
- Use our influence with our partners and businesses to generate opportunities in the area
- Celebrate diversity and support campaigns for greater equality and awareness
- Make equality and consideration of diversity a part of our everyday business. To do this we will expect all of our Members, employees, volunteers and contractors to:
 - Treat everyone with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times
 - Provide the best possible standards of service and value for money to all our customers
 - Consider the needs and opinions of every community.

Specific Commitments in Employment

The Cotswolds Conservation Board is committed to being a fair and supportive employer, developing the skills and talent within our workforce so that employees are able to deliver high quality services to everyone. To achieve this we will:

- Carry out recruitment fairly
- Provide awareness to employees, Board members and volunteers so that they can implement this policy
- Treat all employees fairly, with dignity and respect at all times
- Tackle unacceptable behaviour in the workplace
- Provide employees with opportunities to influence the development of our policies and practice
- Reward all employees fairly and provide employment conditions which support them to do a good job
- Promote a good work-life balance and opportunities to work flexibly
- Support disabled employees by making reasonable adjustments

Who is Responsible for Equalities?

Equality is the responsibility of every Board member, employee and volunteer of the Cotswolds Conservation Board, and any other person or organisation employed by the organisation to work or to deliver services on its behalf.

Our customers also have a responsibility to treat our employees, volunteers and Board members with dignity and respect, and to let us know if they require assistance or adjustments to enable them to better access our services.

Equality Information

Whenever relevant to do so we will collate, analyse, interpret and publish information about equality and diversity in the workforce, service delivery and our communities. This information will be used in equality analysis to inform our service planning and decision making process, to help us

develop and monitor equality objectives, identify ways of improving performance and to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty.

When we ask employees, volunteers and service-users to provide information about their personal characteristics, this will only be done where the information is relevant to the aims of the equality duty – for example if there are known inequalities in relation to a particular outcome or service. The Board will always make it clear that disclosure of sensitive information (e.g. sexual orientation, gender orientation or religion or belief) is optional and not compulsory.

However, without gathering some form of evidence, it may be difficult to monitor the impact of policies and procedures on certain protected groups. The Board will aim to overcome this by creating a culture of trust whereby individuals are comfortable disclosing such information.

The Board will uphold its duty to protect an individual's right to privacy, and will not publish information that could identify an individual. Nor will the information be used to identify an individual or make a decision about them purely on the grounds of the information that has been provided in relation to their protected characteristics. All personal data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and in compliance with our [Data Protection Policy](#) .

Making our services accessible and easy to use

We constantly strive to deliver services that are easily accessible by all who need them, and to support people to participate in public life. This in turn will help us achieve our duty to foster good relations between different groups and individuals. We are committed to listening to our customers to develop an understanding of how we can break down barriers and better meet their needs. This may involve making adjustments to the way we deliver services where it is reasonable to do so.

We will make sure that everyone has the information they need about our services. We will aim to provide all information in plain English and alternative formats on request. We are committed to engaging effectively with local people, community groups and other stakeholders. We will actively seek their views about the Board and the services they receive.

Employing, supporting and developing our workforce

Our employment practice is guided by the principles of equality and fairness. This includes recruitment, terms and conditions, performance reviews, learning and development, promotion and when ending employment. Our activities and approach to achieving this are set out in our suite of HR policies.

Please contact us if you would like copies of any of the policies. As stated in our specific commitments, all employees, volunteers and members of the Board should be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. The Organisation will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour in any form, and the Bullying and Harassment Policy sets out how individual members of employees and volunteers should raise concerns they have about the workplace.