



Equality and Diversity Policy

What this policy covers

The Trust recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination.

The Trust will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity and is responsible for ensuring that in all its dealings with employees, workers, job applicants, clients, customers, partners, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies and the public no one is unlawfully discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation (together the "Protected Characteristics"). The Trust recognises that we live in a diverse society and will endeavour to ensure that all Stakeholders are given the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

In addition, SASP will encourage partner organisations, including member clubs, affiliated associations, suppliers, contractors, sponsors and customers, to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of equality and diversity as set out in this policy.

All employees and those who act on the Trust's behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing the Trust in any other guise.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination which can take the following forms:

Direct Discrimination: treating someone less favourably than you would treat others because of a Protected Characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination: applying a provision, criterion or practice which, on the face of it, applies equally to all but which, in practice can disadvantage individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic. Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be objectively justified.

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and the Trust recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by, the Equality Act 2010. The Trust will take all necessary action to prevent the occurrence of unlawful discrimination.

Specifically, the Trust aims to ensure that no employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital / civil partnership status, maternity, part-time status, age, religion or belief (together the Protected Characteristics). This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures
- training promotion and career-development opportunities
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures
- selection for redundancy

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Trust will review all policies and implement necessary changes where these could improve equality of opportunity and will review this Policy to ensure it continues to reflect the current legal framework and good practice.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

The Trust actively promotes equality of opportunity for all candidates, including those with criminal records where appropriate.

The Trust requires you to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Any such information should be sent in a separate confidential letter to the designated person. Only those who need to see it as a formal part of the recruitment process will have access to this information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from being appointed.

Any recruitment decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). The Trust will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

If you fail to reveal any information relating to disclosures in accordance with the Trust's Disclosures Policy, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Career development

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit.

All employees will have equal access to training and other career-development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, the Trust will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training, support and reasonable adjustments for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career-development opportunities.

Procedure

Complaints of discrimination

The Trust will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination made by employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with your manager or other senior employee using the Trust's Grievance Procedure (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you make an allegation of discrimination, the Trust is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedures.

Investigating accusations of unlawful discrimination

If you are accused of unlawful discrimination, the Trust will investigate the matter fully.

During the course of the investigation, you will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of your actions.

If the investigation concludes that the claim is false or malicious, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the investigation concludes that your actions amount to unlawful discrimination, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

Victimisation

The Trust will not tolerate subjecting someone to a detriment because he or she has in good faith taken action under the Equality Act 2010 (or equivalent legislation) by bringing proceedings, giving evidence or information in relation to proceedings, making an allegation that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010 (or equivalent legislation) or doing any other thing for the purpose of or in connection with the Equality Act 2010 (or any equivalent legislation).

Responsibilities

The Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership Board is responsible for ensuring that this Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented, followed, and reviewed when appropriate. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that this Equality and Diversity Policy is enforced and any breaches are dealt with appropriately.

A member of the Board will be appointed as the "Equality Champion" and will ensure that equality is included as an agenda item at Board meetings when appropriate and that the Board takes equality issues into consideration when making decisions.

The SASP Director has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this Equality and Diversity Policy.

A member of staff will be designated as the Equality Officer (Jane Knowles) by the Director and will have the overall day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this Equality Policy and for achieving any equality related actions resulting from it.

The Trust recognises that, in some cases, to further the principle of equality, an unequal distribution of resources may be required. If appropriate and proportionate, the Trust will consider positive action or may introduce special measures to assist any group with a Protected Characteristic which is currently underrepresented within any group of Stakeholders.



Communication of Policy

The Policy will be included in the employee handbook (paper and electronic copies) and on the SASP website. Reference will be made to this Equality and Diversity Policy in any Code of Conduct.

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be highlighted in all staff and volunteer inductions and be publicly available on the SASP website. All members will be made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy when they join.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This Equality and Diversity Policy will remain in force until it is amended, replaced or withdrawn. A review of this Policy will take place as and when required, but not less than annually.

Complaints Procedures

To safeguard individual rights under this Policy, any Stakeholder who believes they have suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this Policy may raise the matter through the employee grievance procedure.