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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Introduction

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy statement (formerly the Equal Opportunities Policy) has been reviewed to align with The Wildlife Trusts Policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion developed by the Strategic Lead for EDI.

The TWT Policy is based on the Social Model of Inclusion (which takes the focus away from the individual, with the belief that it is environmental barriers that cause a person to become disadvantaged) and ensures that we meet the requirements of the relevant Equality Law. The Policy also goes further to underpin the commitment to EDI with specific focus on:

- Reinforcing our responsibility under both the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, and our role as leaders, service providers, employers and purchasers of goods and services.
- Developing an action plan to help us ensure equality of opportunity across all sections of the workforce, and to ensure our services to all stakeholders are provided fairly and without discrimination.
- Promoting EDI across our trustees and staff, to ensure the removal of unfair discrimination, disadvantage, and harassment. Also, to foster good relations in the workplace and between different groups.
- Educating trustees and staff at all levels to approach their work with an open mind and to offer support and assistance to others without making decisions based on preconceptions.

The Wildlife Trusts *Wild About Inclusion* framework 2022-2027

This is an integral part of *Bringing Back Nature* -The Wildlife Trusts' Strategy 2030.

There are huge benefits to being Wild About Inclusion and embracing equality, diversity and inclusion, for The Wildlife Trusts, for our people and for nature.

- 🦋 **More people will have access to, and will benefit from wildlife** and the natural environment and people from all parts of society will be supporting nature's recovery.
- 🦋 **Our staff will be happier, healthier and more productive.** An inclusive working environment creates a workplace where everyone has equal opportunity to develop, progress, be rewarded and recognised at work. We'll also better attract and retain diverse talent.
- 🦋 **Our organisational performance will be stronger.** Diverse and inclusive organisations have higher innovation and employee satisfaction, increased creativity, and improved leadership and decision making.
- 🦋 **Our volunteers and supporter base will increase and diversify.** By being more inclusive and relevant to diverse communities, we will attract and engage a wider range of people in our work, whilst improving our reputation as an inclusive and accessible movement.

Definitions

Equality is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It's about identifying patterns of experience based on group identity, and challenging processes that limit someone's chance to succeed. Our approach to equality recognises that our social identity, which includes gender, race, disability, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion, will impact on our life experiences.

We are all different - **Diversity** is about recognising the value of difference. It's about understanding each other and truly embracing the diversity of every individual. **Diversity** is about valuing different identities, knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences, and using these differences to create an effective and innovative workforce and increase our effectiveness as a movement.

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and communities. It's about taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected, able to contribute and achieve their full potential. **Inclusion** creates a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued. Everyone has a part to play in promoting inclusivity and creating an environment where everyone can flourish.

1. EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

1.1 Our commitments

- a. Cumbria Wildlife Trust is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and creating a workplace culture in which diversity and inclusion is valued and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. As part of our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination in any form, any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**). We are also committed to providing equitable treatment to all those we deal with as an organisation, including our members and the communities we work with.
- b. We will take all reasonable steps to:
 - i. promote awareness and provide training to trustees, staff and managers on all aspects of equality and diversity in the workplace;
 - ii. apply the principles of equity to volunteers, staff and job applicants so that there is equality of opportunity. Our aim is that no individual is denied volunteering or employment opportunities for reasons unrelated to ability;
 - iii. establish programmes and processes that ensure a diversity of candidates at all career stages beginning with recruitment, including the development and promotion of talent through to the appointment of senior leadership;
 - iv. implement all internal policies and procedures (on a fair and impartial basis);
 - v. create an inclusive working environment that is sensitive to the needs of staff of differing cultures, religions and beliefs. For example, in connection with festivals, religious observance and dress;
 - vi. make reasonable adjustments to enable employees with disabilities to function effectively and to their full potential;

- vii. ensure that work environments are free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying; and
- viii. monitor how this policy is working in practice.

1.2 About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion. Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination in our workplace. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay, benefits and conditions, flexible working and leave, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

1.3 Diversity and inclusion training

- a. Managers will be given appropriate training on recognising and avoiding discrimination, harassment, victimisation and promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in the areas of recruitment, development and promotion.
- b. We will provide with regular training to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands the contents of this policy.

1.4 Discrimination

Staff must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former staff, job applicants, volunteers, members, supporters, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with volunteers, members, or other work-related contacts or when wearing branded clothing), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

- a. **direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay. Direct discrimination can include associative discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of their association with an individual with a Protected Characteristic, and perception discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of the mistaken belief that they possess a Protected Characteristic;
- b. **indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified.
- c. **harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy;
- d. **victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so;

- e. **disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, 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
- f. **discrimination by association:** this is a form of discrimination which occurs when one person has a protected characteristic, but another person is treated negatively from knowing them. For example, you could be discriminated against because you have a family member or a friend who has a disability.

1.5 Approach

Research shows that no one is completely free from prejudice. Prejudices manifest themselves during the early years and are influenced by family, the community and the media. We understand this and as such all our staff will undertake bespoke equality training to help them recognise their prejudices and overcome them, as we are aware that prejudice can lead to discrimination.

Although the Equality Act 2010 details nine protected characteristics, we understand that our trustees, volunteers and employees, do not have to disclose that they hold a specific characteristic. We also understand that people who share the same characteristic often have very different needs, and as such our training through The Wildlife Trusts covers asking open questions and offering support if required, without assuming the type of support that may be needed.

We will not 'pigeon hole' people into single protected characteristic groups, and will always seek to support each protected characteristic equally. Although not covered in the Equality Act 2010, we also include geographical inequality and social inequality in our work.

2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- a. Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. When recruiting or promoting, we aim to take steps to improve the diversity of our workforce and provide equality of opportunity. Shortlisting and interviewing should be done by more than one person and with the involvement of HR, where possible. Our recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are objectively assessed on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- b. Job applicants will not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- c. Job applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of the HR Manager. For example: questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments);
 - i. questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment;

- ii. positive action to recruit disabled persons;
- iii. equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

- d. We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the HR team or UK Visas and Immigration.
- e. To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' ethnic group, nationality, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy and in accordance with data protection legislation.
- f. **positive action:** this refers to certain actions taken to attempt to put right an imbalance in the makeup of a workforce or to offer traineeships/training opportunities to a specific minority group. For example, an organisation may wish to employ more individuals with a disability or those who align themselves as from minority ethnic communities, in order to have a more diverse workforce.

3. Training, promotion and conditions of service

Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals which will be based entirely on an objective assessment of performance and will not be influenced by any Protected Characteristics. Staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable progression within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

4. Termination of employment

- a. We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- b. We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

5. Disabilities

- a. Staff who are disabled or become disabled, are encouraged to tell us about the condition so that we can support them as appropriate.
- b. If staff experience difficulties at work because of a disability, they may wish to contact their Line manager and / or the HR Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Line managers

and /or the HR Manager may wish to consult with the members of staff and their medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate staff needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

- c. We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

6. Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term staff will be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

7. DEVELOPING THIS POLICY

Aligning our Policy with The Wildlife Trusts' we aim to work towards ensuring:

1. We have diverse and inclusive leadership - our movement will be led by diverse, inclusive and effective leaders who embrace the challenge of increasing our diversity and recognise the contribution diversity makes to our movement and to wildlife.
2. We are increasing our diversity – we will become more relevant to more people by ensuring our staff and trustees reflect the diversity of the communities in which we live and work, by increasing opportunities and reducing barriers for marginalised and underserved groups.
3. We are cultivating an inclusive movement –we will cultivate a culture where our staff and trustees are Wild About Inclusion, where difference is celebrated, everyone can be themselves, feel respected and able to contribute to their full potential.
4. We are communicating inclusively – the ways that we connect with our staff and communities will be intentionally inclusive and nurture a sense of belonging. We will demonstrate solidarity for people from different backgrounds, abilities and identities, and ensure they are empowered to change the natural world for the better.
5. We provide access and engagement for everyone - We will increase our engagement with diverse communities, to better understand and overcome barriers to accessing and engaging with nature and to ensure that everyone can benefit from the joy of wildlife in their daily lives.