

Aber Food Surplus Equal Opportunities and Equality and Diversity Policy – June 2019

Aber Food Surplus is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. As an employer, we are committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity within its workforce. We will not tolerate any discrimination, directly or indirectly. This policy should be read in conjunction with our equality strategy.

**What are the protected characteristics?**

The characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

* age
* disability
* gender reassignment
* marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
* pregnancy and maternity
* race
* religion or belief
* sex
* sexual orientation

We also respect the right of our stakeholders not to be harassed or discriminated against on the grounds of class or size.

**Aims of the Policy**

We will:

* Know the diversity of our community and understand its need
* Show leadership and commitment in promoting equality and challenging inequality
* Actively engage our community to participate in decision making processes to improve the services we provide
* Provide services that meet the needs of the diversity of the community and are accessible to all
* Have a workforce where everyone is treated equally with dignity and respect.

Our duty:

We will have due regard to the need to:

* eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
* advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
* foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This involves:

* Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
* 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

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is not about treating people the same, but recognising that everyone has different needs, which need to be met in different ways.

Diversity is based on everyone being different. Our commitment to diversity is about recognising, valuing and respecting differences in others and embracing the differences. We welcome the different skills, abilities and experiences that people bring into the workforce and the wider community.

Aber Food Surplus is both an employer and service provider and has a responsibility to ensure that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using its services. The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal support for this. Our Policy is a statement demonstrating a commitment to:

* Promote equality of opportunity;
* Ensure that equality and diversity is considered in decision-making, service delivery and employment.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All employees and service users will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. For employees, decisions on recruitment, training, promotion or any other benefit will be made objectively, without unlawful discrimination, and based on aptitude and ability. We aspire to have a workforce where everyone is treated equally with dignity and respect and:

1.Recognise and value the differences, skills, abilities and experiences that people bring into the workplace

2.Are committed to the workplace being free of harassment, bullying and discrimination and where people are treated with dignity and respect and allowed to develop their full potential

3.Provide all employees with the training and development they need to enable us to achieve our equality objectives

4.Monitor and act upon adverse trends or inequalities in employment

5.Develop and monitor innovative employment practices. The Company condemns all forms of discrimination and has developed this Equality Policy to promote our equality objectives.

The aims of this policy are therefore, to:

-Eliminate any form of discrimination within the Company on the grounds set out in this policy;

-Create inclusive and sustainable communities in the area that are free from discrimination and harassment;

-When providing services we ensure that employees, volunteers, stakeholders, associates and suppliers are treated fairly and with dignity, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Furthermore, it is recognised that if the above aims are to be successfully achieved the development of additional key equality and diversity policies is required.

We are aware of, and value, the different groups of people and possible future people that we engage with and aim to deliver services for that meet the needs of this diverse client group. All individuals can expect to receive equal access to the services we provide now, and in the future. Detailed below are the equality statements and commitments that, when implemented, will ensure our strategic aims and objectives are met:

1. Confidentiality of information is maintained at all times
2. Our Company has considered physical and social barriers that may prove a barrier to people we engage with, and we have and will continue to consider how to overcome those barriers.
3. We promote our commitment to delivering an inclusive service.
4. The Company respects the bilingual nature of Welsh communities, recognising and where possible promoting the use of the Welsh language.
5. The Company will endeavour to provide suitable interpreting services where appropriate, and will ensure that buildings are accessible to all wherever possible or that a suitable alternative is provided.
6. Where appropriate, the Company advertises vacancies widely to widen the number of potential applicants
7. We are an accredited living wage employer by the Living Wage Foundation (April 2018)
8. We are working towards becoming a Disability Confident employer
9. The Company has a Staff Handbook to ensure fair and legally compliant staff management practice. This has been recently reviewed.
10. We ask suppliers for a copy of their Equal Opportunities Policy
11. We are in the process of signing up to Welsh Governments Ethical Employment Supply Chain Code of Practice

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or suffered harassment because of your gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, age, disability, background, or sexual orientation, you should report this without fail to the Company. Any such complaints will be fully investigated as speedily as possible, and you will be kept advised of action taken.

If you are dissatisfied with any decision, you have the right to use the Company’s formal Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality Policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Law and Good Practice

In implementing this policy, we will endeavour to meet all legal obligations under the protected characteristics of Equality Act 2010

“We embrace diversity, promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work.”

Monitoring and review

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy. The effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) and action taken as necessary.

Complaints

Individuals who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter by contacting the Directors. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that individuals who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal

Third Parties

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. We will not tolerate such actions against our employees and volunteers, and the person concerned should inform their manager at once that this has occurred. Aber Food Surplus will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.