EQUITY, DIVERSITY & OPPORTUNITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

British Exploring Society is committed to encouraging equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce, and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. This policy also covers our commitment to equality of opportunity on our programmes and in all areas of operation as well as all areas of employment.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and of the young people we serve, and for our employees and volunteers to feel respected and able to give their best. Staff will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so that their talents and resources can be fully utilised. The more inclusive we are and the more opportunities we provide, the better we think we'll be at delivering our charitable aims.

RELATED POLICIES

Staff handbook

Safeguarding Policy

Sexual Harassment Policy

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy's purpose is to:

- provide equity, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time;
- ensure that we do not unlawfully discriminate under the definitions of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
- 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 charity commits to:

- Encouraging equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Creating 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 and volunteers are recognised and valued.
- Training senior staff, trustees and all other employees and volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy. All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients, suppliers and the public.
- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, trustees, volunteers, clients, suppliers, visitors, the public and any other members of our community in the course of the charity's work activities.

- Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and updating them and this policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitoring - include assessing how this policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The charity will ensure that:

- Entry into employment with the charity and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act) and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each post and the needs of the charity.
- All role requirements can be objectively justified and do not indirectly discriminate against any groups of potential employees.
- Equal Opportunities Training is provided for all staff and ensure that staff conduct themselves to help the charity provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- We make all reasonable adjustments in cases where working arrangements or physical features of our premises cause substantial disadvantage for a person with a disability.
- We provide wherever possible the equipment, facilities and adjustments needed for job applicants and interviewees with disabilities to enable them to participate fairly.
- No member of staff or volunteer will be treated less favourably than another because of their belonging to a protected group.
- If any member of staff or volunteer considers that they are suffering from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in their appointment or progression because of belonging to any of the above protected groups, they may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances in our Employee Handbook and/or Anti-Bullying SOP as appropriate.

The charity will promote good practice.

It will:

1) Subject its policies, procedures, and training to regular review to examine how they affect protected groups and to identify whether they are helping to achieve equality of opportunity.
2) Promote an open, inclusive culture and seek regular staff feedback.
3) Act wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
4) Publish this policy widely amongst staff, trustees, and volunteers.

Understanding Positive Action

Positive action is range of measures allowed under the Equality Act 2010 which can be lawfully taken to encourage and train people from under-represented groups to help them overcome disadvantages in competing with other applicants for roles in the charity.

The charity will not confuse positive action with positive discrimination, which is unlawful, e.g. the setting of quotas (as opposed to targets, which are lawful) or any form of preferential treatment.

Where positive action is taken to encourage applicants from disadvantaged groups to apply, every applicant will be considered on individual merit and selection for interview and appointment will be based on agreed selection criteria.

The charity acknowledges that the Equality Act 2010 permits reasonable adjustments which may give preferential treatment to an individual with a disability.

Discrimination

In accordance with the law, and the charity's aims, we do not expect any member of staff or volunteer to engage in any behaviour which is discriminatory or harassing. This applies in the workplace, and on work-related trips or events including social events.

Discrimination can come in several forms and staff and volunteers should be aware of what can constitute discrimination:

- 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.
- 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. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- 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.
- Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Supporting Disabilities

If you are suffering with a health issue you are encouraged to tell us about this so that we can consider what can be done to assist and support you.

As part of supporting you, we will discuss and consider whether it is possible and appropriate to make reasonable adjustments to support you at work. What is appropriate will often be based on the particular circumstances.

With your consent, we may need to consult with your doctor (or other relevant medical professional, such as occupational health) to explore any possible reasonable adjustments further and ask for a medical opinion on how to support you. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your 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.

What should I do if I have a complaint under this policy?

If you believe that you have been subjected to discriminatory or undignified treatment at work, then you are encouraged to raise this in accordance with our Grievance Policy.

OUR CHARITABLE PURPOSE AND THIS POLICY

Our mission and vision commit us to creating the structures and contexts for unlocking potential. We are committed to ensuring that all young people and adults have equality of opportunity in terms of access and outcome throughout all aspects of our programmatic work, although we recognise that equality of opportunity will not deliver equal outcomes for all.

Our approach to tackling inequality includes dealing with issues of self- esteem and self-worth, how our programmes are organised and delivered, their learning content, and the building of social relationships within our programmes and wider community.