

## **Sustainable South West Herts CIC** **Equality, diversity and inclusion Policy**

Sustainable South West Herts CIC is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce and volunteers, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for our workforce and volunteers to be truly representative of all sections of society and our community, and for all those involved to feel respected and able to give their best. The organisation, through the work it does, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of the public.

As a group of volunteers, with no employees, we aim in our work through and with those volunteers to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all we do. This includes in the engagement of individuals/ consultants who are hired on short term contracts to undertake specific areas of work for the group.

### **Our commitment to diversity**

Sustainable South West Herts CIC is fully committed to championing and embracing all forms of diversity. We believe it to be fundamental to a successful future – for the impact we achieve as a movement and therefore the wellbeing of our planet. We have always sought to be open to all in society and for all to have a fair say in our work. We wish to benefit from the range of experiences and perspectives that diversity brings. This will mean we make better decisions and our activities can have more impact and be more relevant to all areas of society.

### **Our policy's purpose**

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether voluntary, temporary, part-time or full-time.
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because 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
  - sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
  - terms and conditions of contracts (and any termination)
  - dealing with grievances
  - suspension/ expulsion of members
  - selection for training or other developmental opportunities

### **Our commitments**

The organisation commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
2. Create 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 our workforce and volunteers are recognised and valued.

Responsibilities include our workforce and volunteers conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All our workforce and volunteers 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, customers, suppliers and the public.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt under the organisation's grievance policy, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all our workforce and volunteers, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Make decisions concerning our workforce and volunteers being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
6. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

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

### **Agreement to follow this policy**

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by Sustainable South West Herts CIC members.

### **Our grievance procedures**

Can be found in the Sustainable South West Herts CIC Grievance Policy. This includes with whom members of our workforce and volunteers should raise a grievance.