NORTH NORFOLK FIT TOGETHER

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1155369

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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North Norfolk Fit Together Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Aims of the policy

To promote equality of opportunity across all activities

To foster good relations between people of diverse backgrounds

To eliminate discrimination and victimisation

To comply with current legislation as defined in the Equality Act 2010

2. Who is the Policy for?

All staff employed or volunteering with North Norfolk Fit Together (NNFT), participants and any users of the Services

3. What is equality?

Equality means making sure that individuals or groups are treated fairly and equally and not less favourably in the areas of race, sex, gender re-assignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age

4. What is diversity?

Diversity means recognising, respecting and valuing everyone’s differences and giving them the chance to realise their full potential and enrich the culture of our activities and the wider community to make our organisation fully inclusive

5. What does promotion of equality mean?

We can all promote equality and diversity through:

5.1 Treating everyone we work or come into contact with fairly

5.2 Creating a trusting and inclusive culture for everyone

5.3 Making sure that access to NNFT activities acknowledges equality and diversity and that we take every step to assess any negative impact and address it

5.4 Enabling all staff and participants to develop to their full potential

5.5 Making sure that no resources discriminate against any individual
or group and embedding Equality and Diversity practice through what we do and how we do it

6. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act protects everyone from discrimination and harassment based on eight Protected Characteristics. These are:

6.1 Age

The Equality Act makes age discrimination against the law. The regulations prohibit direct and indirect discrimination and harassment, bullying and victimisation on the ground of age and apply to persons of all ages.

6.2 Disability

6.2.1 The Social model of disability is one that NNFT ascribes to and the Act gives us a duty to promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people. This includes the promotion of positive attitudes towards people with a disability by tackling all forms of harassment and bullying and inclusion through participation in public life and the work environment.

6.2.2 We are required to take positive action to pre-empt unlawful discrimination before it occurs, taking steps to ensure that none of our staff or participants will be discriminatory to someone with a disability.

6.3 Gender (including Transgender)

Our duty by law and our belief is to actively promote gender equality and best practice. We must have due regard for the need to stop unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. We must also have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment for people who intend to undergo, or have undergone gender reassignment.

6.4 Pregnancy and Maternity

This part of the Act protects against discrimination during and after pregnancy and includes unfavourable treatment of a woman because she is breastfeeding.
6.5 Race

6.5.1 The general duty for NNFT under the Act requires us to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote Equal Opportunities
- Promote good relations between people from different ethnic and racial groups

6.5.2 We are required to take positive action to pre-empt unlawful discrimination before it occurs. We must take steps to ensure that none of our staff or participants will be racist. We are also required to target underrepresented minority ethnic groups of learners to increase participation.

6.6 Religion or Belief

The regulations prohibit discrimination on the grounds of “any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief”. This could include

- Collective worship
- A clear belief system or a profound belief affecting a way of life or view of the world

6.7 Sex

In relation to the protected characteristic of sex:

- A reference to a person with a particular characteristic is a reference to a man or woman
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic could be persons of the same or different sex

6.8 Sexual orientation

6.8.1 This protects employees and learners from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. It is illegal to discriminate against, victimise or harass anyone on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is defined as:

- Orientation towards a person of the same gender
- Orientation towards a person of the opposite gender
Orientation towards persons of either gender

6.8.2 No volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment

6.8.3 This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse
- physical contact
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

6.8.4 If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

7. The Equality law protects against the following three areas:

7.1 Discrimination

This includes:

7.1.1 Treating a person worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic (direct discrimination). NB In the case of maternity and pregnancy this can occur if they have this protected characteristic without needing to compare treatment to someone else

7.1.2 Putting in place a rule or a way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one when this cannot objectively be justified, (Indirect discrimination)

7.1.3 Treating a person with a disability unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when there is no justification (discrimination arising from a disability)

7.1.4 Failing to make reasonable adjustments for people with a disability

7.2 Harassment

This is unwanted conduct which has the sole purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity. It could be hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic or in a way that is sexual in nature
7.3 Victimisation

7.3.1 Victimisation means treating someone unfavourably because they may be taking, or supporting someone who is taking, action under the Equality Act.

7.3.2 In addition to the protected characteristics above, the law also protects people from being discriminated against:

- By someone who wrongly perceives them to possess one of the protected characteristics

- Because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. For example: The parent of a child with a disability or a carer for someone with a disability

8. North Norfolk Fit Together Statement on Equal Opportunities

8.1 NNFT is committed to equality and will operate within a culture and structure that recognises diversity and strives to be fair.

8.2 NNFT must be aware of diverse needs of different groups within society and respond positively to eliminate discrimination. Positive action will be used to redress inequalities and to maximise participation.

8.3 North Norfolk Fit Together (NNFT) is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believes that this prevents potential and ability from being realised in young people and others.

8.4 NNFT will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Colour
- Gender
- Sexual orientation or identity
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Age
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status
8.5 As a provider of a service to the community, NNFT accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

8.6 NNFT recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with NNFT's Equal Opportunities Policy. NNFT will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed person.

8.7 NNFT reserves the right to open its membership to any person who supports our aims and objectives. However, it will exclude from membership those persons that actively work against the development of an equal opportunities policy over time, despite encouragement from NNFT.

8.8 NNFT realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- NNFT will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of human resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures. This will be achieved by following the NNFT Equal Opportunities Policy.

- NNFT will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practice through which it carries out its work. This involves the development of greater diversity in the management committee, networks and membership, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.

9. **Use of Language**

9.1 Volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone

9.2 Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

9.3 All materials used or developed by NNFT will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

10 **Rights and Responsibilities**

10.1 This Policy applies equally to everyone who is employed by NNFT (there are currently no employed staff), uses our services or comes into contact with
us through partnerships or the wider community.

10.2 The Policy explains your **rights** and **responsibilities** as members of the above groups. It contributes to Norfolk County Council's three strategic ambitions as defined in the County Council Plan for Norfolk. These are:

- To be an inspirational place with a clear sense of identity
- To have a vibrant, strong and sustainable economy
- To have aspirational people with high levels of skills and achievement

11 **Whose responsibility is Equality and Diversity?**

11.1 Promoting equality and tackling discrimination is the responsibility of everyone.

11.2 The committee of Trustees of NNFT has overall responsibility to ensure that the policy is understood and implemented by everyone who volunteers for NNFT.

11.3 Volunteers have a responsibility to actively promote equality and not discriminate against anybody.

11.4 Participants have a responsibility to challenge discrimination wherever they see it and to uphold the principles of the Equality Act and the NNFT policy.

11.5 All volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with NNFT to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in NNFT projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of NNFT Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as NNFT volunteers.

11.6 If any service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the committee.

12 **How will NNFT deliver its commitment?**

12.1 We will offer an environment where:

- All who want take part in NNFT activities will have the opportunity to fully participate and achieve their potential.
- Physical, social and other barriers are minimised
- There is a welcoming and supportive environment
- Participation programmes and places of activity actively promote equality of opportunity
- Everyone accepts that it is their responsibility to uphold the Equality legislation and show respect for others

12.2 NNFT will also:
- Work with our partners to ensure that we meet the needs of the wider community
- Investigate any incidence or allegation of discrimination and act upon the findings. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.
- Assess new and existing policies, procedures and practices to make sure that they are accessible and non-discriminatory.
- Monitor our participation environments to make sure that they are accessible and non-discriminatory
- Aim higher by listening, responding to and caring for everyone who works for, or uses our services and the wider community that we serve
- Ensure that access to Equality information is available through a diverse range of media, when required

13 Monitoring and Review

13.1 The Policy will be constantly reviewed by the committee of Trustees to ensure that no Member of the group is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff and volunteers and the provision of services.

13.2 It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

13.3 The committee of Trustees of NNFT will review this policy annually.