

Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association

Equal Opportunities Policy

January 2012

1 Statement of Intent

WFDA is committed to the treatment of everyone equally and without discrimination or prejudice on the grounds of:

- race,
- ethnic origin,
- nationality,
- cultural background,
- age,
- gender,
- sexuality,
- marital status,
- caring responsibilities,
- disability,
- class,
- HIV
- status and religion.

2 Scope and Aims of the Policy

The WFDA's Equality Policy applies equally to the following areas:

- Membership of WFDA
- Partnerships working to provide services and support
- Recruitment, employment and training
- the Board of Trustees
- the engagement of consultants and/or contractors

In respect of this the WFDA will fulfil its statutory duties and comply with the law on equal opportunities.

The WFDA will comply with codes of practice and codes of guidance on equal opportunities issued by government and other relevant agencies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission.

The WFDA recognises that the current scope of legislation seeks only to protect certain groups. The WFDA's policy extends this to oppose discrimination on the basis of sexuality, age, cultural background, caring responsibilities, HIV status and religion.

3 Partnership working towards provision of services and support

The WFDA will provide services that:

- Respect diversity
- Recognize and respond to the different needs of enquirers without discrimination or prejudice
- Endeavour to be equally accessible and relevant to different groups

The WFDA recognises that in certain circumstances it cannot act alone and therefore it will work with other agencies in the community to ensure that all people it seeks to support receive proper and appropriate community wide support.

Board of Trustees

The WFDA will in respect of its governing body be aware of the communities it serves and aims to reflect the communities served in its composition and in tandem ensure that adequate expertise is also present.

The WFDA will take disciplinary action against any Board member or staff whose conduct or actions are inconsistent with the WFDA commitment to equality of opportunity.

Contractors, Consultants and teaching staff

The WFDA will advise contractors, consultants, teaching staff and other agencies working with the WFDA of its commitment to equal opportunities and request details of their own equal opportunities policies and expect active adherence to these.

The WFDA will take appropriate action against any contractors, consultants, teaching staff or other agencies working for The WFDA whose conduct or actions are inconsistent with The Outsiders Trust's commitment to equality of opportunity.

4 Equal Opportunities in Employment

The WFDA will endeavour at all times to employ the person most suitable for each job. It is also committed to ensuring that it provides equality of opportunity in employment.

As an employer, The WFDA believes its workforce should reflect the community that it serves and that all groups should be properly represented at all levels within its organisation.

The WFDA is committed to the following actions in order to fulfil this policy:

- The treatment of all persons equally in respect of membership and employment of staff;
- Ensuring that requirements for posts are neither onerous nor inappropriate and do not adversely discriminate against individual groups;

- Ensuring, where possible, its workforce reflects the composition of the population it is responsible for;
- Keeping records of the ethnicity/gender/disability of all those seeking membership and employment from The WFDA;
- Ensuring that all staff understand and value diversity in the community;
- Ensuring that the working environment is supportive and open and that all employees have the opportunity to reach their highest potential.

The WFDA recognises that discrimination can take different forms:

- Direct Discrimination: This is treating one person less favourably than another, because of, for example, race or sex.
- Indirect Discrimination: Indirect discrimination is creating a condition or requirement of employment, which cannot be shown to be justifiable, and which in practice precludes people from certain groups from, for example, getting a job. An example would be specifying that applicants are required to have qualifications, which are not needed to carry out the duties of the post.
- Harassment: Harassment is where staff are harassed or abused because of, for example, race, sex or disability.
- Victimisation: Victimisation is where a person is treated less favourably because they have pursued or it is suspected they will pursue their rights via the grievance procedure and/or legal proceedings.

The WFDA will take action to eliminate discrimination. This will include the following:

- Membership
- Recruitment
- All vacancies will be advertised in a way that does not discourage traditionally disadvantaged groups from applying for the posts.
- When recruiting staff, specific qualifications or experience will be called for only where they are really necessary to the job.
- Training will be given to all staff and management members involved in recruitment to ensure that they understand and apply the equal opportunities policy.

Training

All staff will receive training to ensure that they understand and implement all aspects of the policy.

Working Environment

- Suitable access for staff with disabilities will be provided in the workplace, along with a programme of improvement to ensure existing arrangements are improved where necessary.
- Needs of staff with disabilities will be met, including providing adapted equipment and changes of working methods to help meet those needs.

While it is essential that The WFDA is able to be provided high quality services at all times, working arrangements will have regard to staff members' responsibility for dependants and/or individual personal circumstances.

The WFDA will endeavour to ensure that a supportive working environment is created for all staff so as to prevent the occurrence of any direct or indirect discriminatory working practices.

Monitoring

- The composition of the membership and workforce will be monitored in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability.
- All applicants for jobs will be monitored in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability.
- Reports will be made to the board of management, recommending action where appropriate.

Condition of Employment

It is a condition of service that staff adheres to The WFDA's equal opportunities policy and failure to do so shall be a cause for disciplinary procedures to be instituted, which could result in dismissal.

All job applicants and volunteers will be made aware of the equal opportunities policy, as detailed in the WFDA Volunteering Policy.

As part of an induction programme for new staff, The WFDA's equal opportunity policy will be explained.

5 Responsibility

Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

6 Review

The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains compliant with all legislation and recommended codes of practice and guidance.