
Groundwork London

Equality & Diversity Policy

August 2019

Review

This policy and procedure will be regularly reviewed, and in the first instance after 24 months and thereafter at a time scale to be determined and in accordance with current practice and legislation.

Version 1: October 2010
Reviewed: October 2011
 December 2013
 May 2015
 May 2017
 August 2019

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The success of Groundwork depends on our people and our partners. The way we deliver our services is strengthened by capitalising on what is unique about individuals, drawing on their different perspectives and experiences, and by accessing the strengths and expertise of a diverse range of partners.

By accessing, recruiting and developing people from the widest possible talent pool and engaging with a wide range of partners Groundwork can gain an insight into different communities and generate greater creativity in its approaches.

Groundwork will constantly strive to create productive environments, representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

Groundwork London is helping people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects, and to live and work in a greener way. We create projects and services that benefit both people and the wider environment. We focus our activity on disadvantaged communities where we can make most difference.

To achieve this, we need to make sure that Groundwork puts equality and diversity practices into effect in both employment and service delivery.

Groundwork's commitment to equality and diversity is more than promoting equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination, bullying and harassment. We are actively committed to implementing the Equality Act 2010 encouraging and promoting the positive contribution of our staff, diverse Federation members, partners and sub-contractors. We will ensure that this is reflected in our practices, policies and services provided.

This policy describes the role of Groundwork London in promoting equality and diversity.

Commitment to this policy is required by all Groundwork London employees, volunteers and trustees, sub-contractors, delivery partners, customers and service beneficiaries, referred to collectively as the 'stakeholders'.

1.2 AIM

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination (whether direct, indirect, associative, perceptive or harassment).
- To create positive cultures throughout where equality, diversity and respect is a core value and at the centre of all our activities.
- To encourage positive action to overcome disadvantage and discrimination and to enable people to achieve their full potential.
- To enable the highest possible standards to be achieved in delivery of our services and employment practices and the promotion of equality and diversity through our work internally and externally

1.3 POLICY STATEMENT

The promotion of diversity and genuine equality of opportunity for all are central to ensuring a fair and just society. Groundwork London is committed to ensuring all of our employees, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders are given equal opportunity to achieve their potential and are valued for the contribution they can make. In pursuing this commitment, Groundwork London will ensure that:

- in the development and use of employment procedures and practices, Groundwork London will positively promote equality and diversity so that no person or group of people will suffer

discrimination in recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions, access to training or other benefits. Employees will be valued and respected and not be subjected to bullying or harassment in the workplace.

- in the development and delivery of services from or on behalf of Groundwork, Groundwork London will positively promote equality and diversity so that no person or group of people will suffer discrimination in access to or enjoyment of those services. Groundwork London will ensure that sub-contractors and delivery partners provide a safe and welcoming environment that offers the support that service users need to succeed and that, where appropriate, they will take positive steps to address gaps in achievement between different groups and will take steps to promote good citizenship throughout our delivery.

Groundwork London shall continue to actively work towards positively promoting equality and eliminating discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity status, marital or civil partnership status, referred to collectively as the 'protected characteristics'.

Groundwork London must promote a culture where discriminatory behaviour by its employees, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders are routinely challenged in a polite and constructive manner so the person making them has a chance to correct their behaviour. If they are unwilling to change their behaviour, then disciplinary action should result and/or their continued engagement with Groundwork London should be considered as set out in section 7 of this policy. This is to help all the range of diverse communities that we serve view Groundwork as an organisation that is relevant to their needs, which will not act in a way that is discriminatory or offensive, and for whom it is attractive to work, volunteer or partner.

All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated and, if proven, will result in appropriate action for the perpetrator. Any employees, volunteers, trustees or stakeholders that are found to breach this policy could be subject to disciplinary procedures as set out in their terms of employment, service contract or partnership agreement and/or their continued engagement with Groundwork should be considered.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND THE GROUNDWORK BUSINESS

Working alongside communities, public bodies, private companies and voluntary sector organisations, Groundwork develops and delivers initiatives that cut across economics, social issues and the environment. To create real change that means carrying out work that:

- builds people's skills and improves job prospects
- redesigns our neglected open spaces for twenty-first century use
- helps people make their own decisions about their area
- motivates and develops our young people
- promotes greener ways of living and working.

To achieve our vision, Groundwork London must work inclusively as an employer with passionate individuals, as a prime contractor or service provider with proactive public services and as a supplier or part of the supply chain with innovative parts of the private sector. This policy applies to all these Groundwork London roles.

2.1 GROUNDWORK LONDON AS EMPLOYER

Groundwork London will ensure that it actively promotes equality to job applicants, persons under contract personally to do work, apprentices, employees and ex-employees on the grounds of the protected characteristics, people resident in areas of deprivation and where relevant, other disadvantaged groups not protected in law.

Groundwork London will ensure that no job applicant, person under contract personally to do work, apprentice, employee, or ex-employee experiences discrimination or harassment due to a relevant

past or current protected characteristic, another's perception of their possessing a particular relevant protected characteristic, or due to their association with another person possessing a particular relevant protected characteristic.

Groundwork London will ensure that an individual will not be victimised if they carry out one of the following protected acts: making a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowers Act); bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010; giving evidence or information in connection with such proceedings; doing anything which is related to provisions of the Equality Act 2010; making an allegation that someone else has done something in breach of the Equality Act 2010; or having a "relevant pay discussion" with a colleague or former colleague.

Other policies and decisions relating to Groundwork London terms and conditions of work, pay and benefits, leave and flexible working arrangements, access to facilities, pensions, dress codes, appraisals and performance management, promotion and transfer, handling of grievance and disciplinary, procurement of equipment, IT systems, software, and websites, evacuation procedures, and treatment of employees when their employment ends, are reviewed against this policy in order to ensure a consistent approach to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring anti-discriminatory practice.

Groundwork London will not unlawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion.

Groundwork London may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group which Groundwork London identifies as being underrepresented in particular types of job.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others, whether or not it is directed at them, to their manager who will take appropriate action and begin relevant investigations as detailed in the Grievance policy.

Groundwork London is committed to:

- welcoming and valuing diversity amongst our staff, volunteers and trustees for the range of skills, experience and perspectives it brings
- building our reputation as an ethical and truly inclusive organisation where people want to work
- providing an excellent service to all our stakeholders by working in partnership and understanding their needs
- meeting our organisational goals by encouraging and enabling all to fulfil their potential
- recognising we can always do more to become truly inclusive, and committing to regular self-assessment and improvement.

The diversity of the communities we serve is reflected at all levels within our workforce through:

Gender

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution throughout all levels of the organisation through:

- challenging gender stereotypes
- supporting employees in balancing their life at work and at home.

Gender identity

Employees who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. Groundwork London will take positive steps to support a transgender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Marital status

Employees are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status.

Race

The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is represented at all levels of the Federation through:

- challenging racial stereotypes
- understanding, respecting and valuing racial and cultural difference and perspectives
- encouraging and enabling members of minority ethnic groups to volunteer or work for Groundwork at all levels.

Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued at all levels of the organisation through:

- focussing on what employees can do rather than on what they cannot
- challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities and in particular, not making false assumptions that disabled people are unable to do certain things
- making appropriate adjustments in the workplace so that all employees can reach their full potential regardless of any disability.

Age

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- challenging age stereotyping
- recognising that new ideas and fresh approaches can come from anyone irrespective of their age
- recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

Religion or belief

Employees are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their religious beliefs, faith or lack of belief. Employees are also expected to recognise the individual freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution of other individuals and groups.

Note: The expression of beliefs and opinions should not contravene Groundwork's values or its capability to carry out its work.

Sexual orientation

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- respecting the rights of everyone irrespective of whether or not they are open about their sexuality
- respecting different lifestyles even if someone's different lifestyle conflicts with one's own religious or cultural beliefs
- challenging negative stereotypical views
- celebrating and welcoming significant lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGBT) events in the same way as similar events of importance to heterosexual people e.g. marriage, are celebrated.

2.2 GROUNDWORK LONDON IN PARTNERSHIP**Equality**

Groundwork London is committed to ensuring that its delivery partners, promote equality within their own workforces and deliver services that are accessible and inclusive to people from all backgrounds in particular those within the protected characteristics. Groundwork London will therefore ensure that its sub-contractors and delivery partners:

- provide policies that reflect the same equality and diversity standards as Groundwork London;
- or commit to adhering to Groundwork London's approved policies

Diversity

Groundwork London is committed to proactively encouraging diversity across its key activities, including the sourcing and management of supply chains. Groundwork London seeks to provide a level playing field for all potential suppliers irrespective of:

- Size: Groundwork London encourages small and medium enterprise (SME) suppliers
- Ethnicity: Groundwork London encourages suppliers from black and minority ethnic enterprises (BAMEs)
- Ownership: Groundwork London encourages suppliers from public, private and third sector organisations
- Location: Groundwork London encourages all potential suppliers, wherever they are based.

Groundwork London procurement processes, while proportionate to the value involved will be transparent, objective and non-discriminatory.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Groundwork London employees, trustees, partners and other stakeholders.

This policy is subject to the provisions outlined in our Equal Opportunities policy and in particular the Equality Act 2010.

4. THE NATURE OF DISCRIMINATION

This policy refers to several forms of discrimination. These are explained below:

Direct Discrimination results from treating a person less favourably on the grounds of a relevant protected characteristic.

Associative Discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied which is such that it would be to the detriment of a considerably larger proportion of the relevant group with a particular protected characteristic to which the individual belongs, than to others, which is not objectively justifiable and which is to the individual's detriment.

Victimisation occurs if someone is given less favourable treatment than others because they have exercised their rights under the policy, or the relevant legislation, or brought to the attention of others, acts of discrimination (e.g. by making a complaint or providing information on discrimination).

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct related to one of the protected characteristics which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, or is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his or her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him or her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Discrimination arising from a disability is where a person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified.

5. TRAINING, COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Groundwork London will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment, procurement, contract management or other decision-making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

Groundwork London will provide training to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work at Groundwork London to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities policy and what they can do to help create an environment free of bullying and harassment for employees, trustees, contractors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Groundwork London will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

Groundwork London publishes all its policies and procedures, referenced through the staff handbook and promoted during induction of new employees, volunteers and trustees. It is also made available to stakeholders. Updates on this policy are communicated at staff meetings.

6. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Every employee, volunteer and trustee, and stakeholder is required to assist Groundwork London to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment, service provision and procurement and to avoid unlawful discrimination.

Groundwork London's Corporate Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring that Executive Team Directors monitor the implementation of this policy by their staff and sub-contractors and partners.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, trustees, sub-contractors, suppliers or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Groundwork London's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal, termination of contract or withdrawal of services.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Groundwork London for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit acts of harassment are committing a criminal offence and will be reported to the Police for investigation.

7. GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Employees

Employees who consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, bullied or harassed use Groundwork London's Grievance policy to make a complaint. Groundwork London will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. Employees will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Use of Groundwork London's Grievance policy does not affect the right of an employee to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months of the complaint being made.

Sub-Contractors and Partners

Sub-contractors or suppliers who consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, bullied or harassed should use Groundwork London's contract review process to make a complaint or Groundwork London's complaint procedure.

Use of Groundwork London's contract review process does not affect any statutory rights.

Customers

Customers who consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, bullied or harassed may use Groundwork London's Complaints policy to make a complaint. Groundwork London has a responsibility to seek to ensure the highest possible standards of service to partners, funders, users and all those with whom Groundwork has dealings in line with the Trust's purpose and core values, limited only by available funding and staffing resources.

Use of Groundwork London's Complaints policy does not affect any statutory rights.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored by annual review by the Executive Team and Groundwork London Board to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law and in response to employer, sub-contractor and beneficiary feedback.

Groundwork London will monitor the ethnicity, gender, age and disability status of the existing workforce, of job applicants (including promotion), and of beneficiaries, and will review its equality and diversity policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, Groundwork London will implement them.

For contracted provision, Groundwork London will ensure that data collection methodologies are in place as contractual requirements, enabling equality and diversity data to be monitored on an annual basis.

Information provided by job applicants, employees and customers for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)