



Swansea Asylum Seekers Support

Registered Charity: 1175186

Web: www.sass.wales

Email: vol.sbassg@gmail.com

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 SASS is committed to the promotion of equality, dignity and diversity in all its work. SASS is committed to social justice and is opposed to discrimination in society. We positively promote the principles of equality, dignity and diversity in all our work and projects.

SASS intends to promote this policy both inside and outside the organisation.

1.2 SASS is committed to including asylum seekers and refugees in the running of the organisation.

1.3 SASS will ensure that all its employment practices, activities and projects are inclusive. All committee members, volunteers and employees will have equal access to opportunities depending on their individual ability and aspirations. This will be regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic origin, nationality, language, age, political and religious beliefs or disability.

1.4 SASS is committed to having diverse volunteers, trustees and employees. We are committed to taking positive steps to promote and sustain equal opportunities amongst our volunteers and members and in the services we provide. In all its activities SASS will counter harmful stereotypes about groups and individuals.

We are also committed to ensuring that knowledge about customs, cultural backgrounds, lifestyles and other issues affecting oppressed groups are more widely understood.

1.5 Overall responsibility for implementing the policy lies with the annually elected committee.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and committee members. Everyone involved with SASS is expected to adhere to the principles of this policy. The policy is based on the Equality Act 2010 and the Protected Characteristics:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a) age | f) race |
| b) disability | g) religion or belief |
| c) gender reassignment | h) sex |
| d) marriage and civil partnership | i) sexual orientation |
| e) pregnancy and maternity | |

This policy is implemented in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 and ACAS guidance.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Collective responsibilities

Equality of opportunity will be applied throughout all SASS' policies and procedures.

The responsibility for promoting equality within SASS lies with all of the elected Committee.

The Chair will present an Equality Annual Report (as a section of the overall SASS Annual Report) commenting on the degree of equality in the participation in SASS activities by volunteers and others, on any problems encountered in respect of equality, and on measures taken to address such problems. The Chair's Equality Annual Report will also identify specific actions to improve SASS' equality performance in the year ahead.

3.2 Individual responsibilities

SASS expects that each person involved in SASS activities should be aware of their behaviour towards others. Everyone should be treated equally, with dignity and respect.

Each person should ensure that they do not behave in a way that could be regarded as harassment, discriminating or offensive.

The co-operation of all employees, volunteers and committee members is essential for the success of this policy. SASS will ensure that all employees, volunteers, subcontractors and agents are aware of the policy and what is expected of them to promote equal opportunities.

SASS expects that each individual should recognise that discrimination of any kind is unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of each person to report incidents of discrimination or harassment to members of the Committee.

3.3 Management Duties

The Committee has a duty to promote and sustain equality of opportunity and to establish and maintain an environment free from harassment and bullying. The Committee will do this by:

- Ensuring that all volunteers and employees are made aware of this policy at their induction and that discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or any form of harassment, is unacceptable
- applying the principles of equality of opportunity throughout the application of all SASS' policies and procedures
- ensuring that no would-be volunteer is discriminated against either directly or indirectly
- ensuring that the mechanism for reporting incidents of discrimination or harassment is known, understood and can be accessed by all volunteers and employees
- monitoring incidents of discrimination via reports to the Committee Chair
- taking prompt action to stop harassment, bullying or discrimination as it is identified
- ensuring that no offensive or potentially offensive material is displayed at SASS events

4. Working practice

4.1 Service delivery

Unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, on any grounds, in the delivery of any of SASS' services, is unlawful. We will design and deliver services in a way that encourages inclusion and engagement by members and users with diverse needs.

SASS will ensure equality of opportunity in its service provision; it will:

- develop its understanding of the differing needs of asylum seekers and refugees
- treat members with dignity and respect and acknowledge people's individual needs and requirements.
- review service provision to ensure it is inclusive
- deliver projects and services in ways that promote the principles of equality, dignity and diversity
- identify areas where sections of the community are currently excluded from receiving services and seeing if this can be redressed
- apply the principles of equality when determining priorities
- respond flexibly and imaginatively to requests for service
- monitor and report incidents where this policy has not been followed
- use accessible venues
- provide information in different formats and languages where possible.
- expect people who provide services on behalf of SASS to implement our Equalities and Diversity practice.

SASS will inform associated organisations, and those who use SASS services and take part in SASS activities, of our commitment to equality of opportunity and the content of this policy.

4.2 Volunteer recruitment and development

Refugees and asylum seekers will be supported to engage in volunteering activities, to enable them to be more involved in SASS. Recruitment of volunteers and provision of opportunities for involvement and development will be on the basis of organisational and individual need and potential. Recognition will be given to individual's personal circumstances (e.g. carer responsibilities) as well as SASS' aspiration for all to have equal access to involvement and development opportunities.

SASS will;

- Ensure all adverts, materials, job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment materials avoid presenting people in a stereotyped role.
- Actively seek to recruit within the mix of talents, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcoming applications from a wide range of candidates.
- Ensure no person applying for a job or volunteer role is treated less or more favourably than another on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- Select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of SASS.
- Use a number of selection methods to test role and person specification criteria.
- Use a clear system so that all candidates have an equal chance **and** we choose the best candidate for the job.
- Record our thinking and reasons for our final decision clearly to show that we have followed equal opportunities legislation and good practice.

5. Policy Implementation

This policy will be implemented through specific actions identified in the Chair's Equality Annual Report.

5.1 Promotion of the policy

All Committee members, volunteers and employees will receive a copy of this policy and be made aware of its contents and requirements through induction. In addition, SASS will make members aware of the existence of the policy and post it on the SASS website.

5.2 Monitoring

SASS will demonstrate its continuing commitment to the implementation of this policy by regular monitoring and review. SASS recognises the importance of monitoring and evaluation to the success of implementing and maintaining equal opportunity practice.

This policy will be reviewed one year after implementation and biennially thereafter. The responsibility for this review will lie with the Committee and specifically with the Chair who will ensure it is on the agenda.

Where there is evidence that anyone is not being offered equality of opportunity in respect of SASS activities and events, the Committee will take immediate steps to examine its policies, procedures, and criteria to establish whether certain individuals or groups are excluded, discouraged, or disadvantaged.

Specific concerns should be raised with the Equality Officer, in writing, in the first instance.

Members and other individuals and organisations which use SASS' services may also raise issues with the Equality Officer or any other Committee member.

5.3 Acting on discrimination and harassment

Where there is evidence of discrimination or harassment or bullying by a volunteer or employee, the complaint will be dealt with through the Disciplinary policy.

Employees or volunteers who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed should follow the Grievance Procedure.

Any complaints that Committee members have breached the Equal Opportunities policy will be investigated by a nominated member acceptable to both parties. Following the investigation and hearing the person concerned may be asked by the Committee to resign.

Appendix A - Definitions

Direct Discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably directly because of:

- a protected characteristic they possess – this is direct discrimination; and/or
- a protected characteristic of someone they are associated with, such as a friend, family member or colleague – this is direct discrimination by association; and/or
- a protected characteristic they are thought to have, regardless of whether this perception by others is actually correct or not – this is direct discrimination by perception. Direct discrimination in all its forms could involve a decision not to employ someone, to dismiss them, withhold promotion or training, offer poorer terms and conditions or deny contractual benefits because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to a group of employees/job applicants, but has (or will have) the effect of putting those who share a certain protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared to others in the group, and the employer is unable to justify it.

Harassment is defined as unwanted abusive or insulting behaviour towards another individual, regardless of the intent of the harasser. It causes the recipient to feel threatened, humiliated or harassed, may interfere with work performance, undermine job security or create a threatening, hostile, degrading or intimidating work environment.

Harassment may occur on a number of grounds including colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age or disability

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably because that person made a previous complaint on grounds of gender, marital status, race or disability, or if that person supported someone else who has or acted as the victim's witness.

Hate crime is a criminal act motivated by a victim's race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Updated March 2020