



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The Act came into force on 1 October 2010. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone. The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

### 1. Statement of Intent

Forest Read Easy Deal (FRED) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for all. Fred's purpose is to offer all adults in the Forest of Dean District and its surrounding borders the literacy skills they need to realise their potential and live life to the full, regardless of background.

FRED recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, gender transitioning, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical or mental health, HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record. These are sometimes known collectively as Protected Characteristics.

FRED aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences. FRED is committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

All FRED activities are covered by this policy. Activities will be reviewed regularly and changed where needed in the light of the policy.

### 2. Definitions

**Equality** means we remove barriers, eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities and access for all volunteers working within the organisation.

**Diversity** is understanding, recognising and valuing differences both visible (e.g., race, gender, age) and non-visible (e.g., religious beliefs, values, preferences). It means we recognise that everyone is unique.

**Inclusion** means we focus on attracting and developing talent and ability wherever it exists and encourage everyone in our organisation to reach their full potential in whatever they do. We aim to have an organisational culture where differences are not merely accepted but valued and where everyone has the opportunity for personal development in line with FRED's ethos and values.

### 3. What is discrimination?

FRED believes that discrimination can take one or more of the forms set out below:

**Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics set out above.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where a person is disadvantaged by a particular provision, criterion or practice ("PCP") that places other people with the same Protected Characteristic at a disadvantage, and the PCP cannot be justified.

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is prohibited within FRED.

**Victimisation** is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint. Victimisation is also prohibited within FRED.

### 4. Use of Language

Volunteers and learners will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles those with Protected Characteristics.

Discrimination in any of the forms stated above is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome or inappropriate and they persist with it, then the learner, volunteer or employee who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

### 5. Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers and service users are responsible for ensuring that no learner, volunteer or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated in the first paragraph of this policy. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers and employees to work with FRED are responsible for ensuring that recruits are aware of FRED's Equality and Diversity Policy and adhere to it whilst working with FRED.

#### The FRED Management Team will:

- promote equality and diversity and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs
- ensure that induction for all employees and volunteers includes briefings on this and other policies to enable them to develop in line with FRED's aims and objectives
- ensure all trainers, facilitators and consultants contracted to work for FRED support this policy
- ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply any stereotyping

- ensure all advertisements for employees and volunteers will state that FRED is seeking to be an effective employer with regard to equality and diversity. A copy of FRED's Equality and Diversity Statement will form part of all application packs; application forms will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid
- monitor certain information about job applicants and volunteer applications, in the interests of operating an effective Equality and Diversity Policy. All such information will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff
- make every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community
- plan its services and activities recognising that not everyone has access to personal transport or is able to use it
- reserve the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy
- make copies of this policy, with a named contact for more information, freely available to employees, volunteers, and any other interested parties
- monitor the policy and its implementation
- review this policy every 3 years

A copy of FRED's Equality and Diversity Policy will be given to all new employees, volunteers and Management Team members. Also, to interested parties, on request. Training can be provided for employees, Management Team members and volunteers on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that will develop equality and diversity.

The Management Team's membership (including co-opted members) should aim to reflect a fair balance and representation of the local community and should endeavour to redress any imbalance of under-represented groups.

## **6. Dealing with Complaints**

If any learner, volunteer or employee feel that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the FRED Management Team. 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 and may involve using a disciplinary procedure.

## **7. Monitoring**

The FRED Management Team is available to advise, inform and consult with management, employees, volunteers and learners in order to progress and improve equality and diversity within FRED.

FRED Management Team will:

- monitor progress and development towards equality and diversity
- ensure employee, service user and volunteer awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues and practices within FRED via training and development
- know or have access to appropriate information, legislation, policy etc for the purposes of carrying out this role

- identify, advise on and provide equality and diversity training as needed

## **8. Further information**

Other FRED policies, procedures and practice support our commitment to equality and diversity. For further information contact:

FRED Administrator: John Izzard

T: 07503 770537

e: [jipevensey@aol.com](mailto:jipevensey@aol.com)

FRED Coach Co-ordinator

T: 01594 832669

e: [sheilapriest49@gmail.com](mailto:sheilapriest49@gmail.com)

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