
Arkenstall Village Centre
(Registered Charity No. 300394)
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Equality and Diversity Policy

1. **Introduction** The Trustees and other representatives of the Arkenstall Village Centre (hereinafter referred to as 'AVC') acknowledge that the United Kingdom is diverse in culture, race, beliefs and religion and believes that no individual or group of people should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- age,
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity,
- race,
- gender,
- disability,
- marital or civil partnership status,
- religion or belief,
- sexual orientation,

(all of which above are termed as "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010)

- nationality,
- racial or national origins,
- cultural heritage,
- social background,
- geographical location,

or any other perceived or imagined characteristic. The AVC acknowledges that people can be under-represented, exposed to harassment, prejudice and stereotyping, and suffer various other disadvantages within our society on the grounds described above.

The purpose of this Policy Statement is to set out clearly and fully the positive action that the AVC intends to take to combat direct and indirect discrimination in employment policy, the management of the organisation, its relationships with other bodies, and the services it provides to the community, community organisations and individuals.

The AVC is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all areas of its work. It aims to overcome discrimination on the grounds described above. The AVC recognises that positive steps need to be taken to ensure equality of provision in areas of representation, service provision, membership and access and will take action to make this policy effective.

2. **The Aims of the AVC** are to ensure that it retains its awareness of discrimination and the problems it can cause, and to combat discrimination by:
- a) being committed to the equal opportunities policy set out in this document and working to develop, improve and monitor it, and
 - b) ensuring all staff, hirers and committee members are aware of its policy on equal opportunities, and providing relevant training where appropriate.

3. **Policy Statement**

Legislation

The AVC acknowledges the definitions of the grounds on which people may be vulnerable to discrimination as set out in the relevant legislation (latest: Equality Act 2010), known as "protected characteristics". The AVC will support and implement the legislation and will work to ensure that no person protected by the legislation, nor any other person not so protected, is discriminated against, and that any positive obligations and duties under the Act are performed.

The AVC gives the following specific commitments:

- (a) **Disability** The AVC recognises that the legislation also applies to persons who do not apparently have a disability or illness. Where reasonably practical, the AVC will aim to widen accessibility by removing barriers which make it difficult for people with disabilities to use the Arkenhall Centre premises and providing facilities for people with disabilities to enable them to participate in activities.
 - (b) **Age** The AVC believes that people of all ages have skills, experiences and ideas which are equally valid, and also have valid needs, expectations and aspirations.
 - (c) **Ethnic Minorities** The AVC will challenge racism in any form and will encourage its users to do the same.
 - (d) **Gender and Sexual Orientation** The AVC will challenge sexist policies, practices and attitudes (including policies, practices and attitudes which may relate to sexual orientation and gender re-assignment), and will encourage its users to do the same.
 - (e) **Religion and Belief** The AVC endorses the right of each individual to his or her own religious beliefs or the absence of a belief.
- c) **Code of Conduct**
for which the Trustees have overall responsibility, but which must also be adhered to by all employees, volunteers and service users.
- (a) All people will be treated with dignity and respect.
 - (b) People's feelings and views will be valued and respected. Language or humour in contravention of this Equality and Diversity Policy and which people find offensive will not be used or tolerated.
 - (c) No one will be harassed abused or intimidated. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously, and the AVC will undertake investigations of any and all complaints quickly, impartially and thoroughly.
 - (d) The AVC will exclude from membership any organisation that works against its Equality and Diversity Policy despite encouragement from the AVC to do otherwise.
 - (e) The AVC will seek to prevent discrimination and to encourage equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practices through which it carries out its work. This involves the encouragement of greater diversity in the Management Committee, networks and membership to ensure a genuinely wide representation.
 - (f) The AVC will ensure that this Equality and Diversity Policy is followed when considering anyone for employment.

4. **Review** The AVC will review this Equality and Diversity Policy every two years.