



# **Westgate Youth Project**

## **Equality & Diversity**

### **Policy**

**April 2021**

## Westgate Youth Project

### Policy Statement

The management committee of Westgate Youth Project is committed to equality and diversity. It is the policy of the organisation to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects people who have a 'protected characteristic', i.e., **Age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality), religion or belief and sexual orientation**. This means that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and equality, and no young person, volunteer, job applicant, or employee receives less favourable treatment.

The organisation is open to all and we will not tolerate attitudes and behaviour that amounts to discrimination on these grounds.

Equality and diversity is about accepting people's differences and creating an environment in which all can thrive and contribute. Westgate Youth Project is committed to ensuring that all feel valued, the skills and values of individuals are recognised and fully utilised and that the environment in the organisation is productive and rewarding. The organisation is a place where there is respect for difference in culture and experience. The organisation will take whatever actions are reasonable and practicable to ensure the equal access to all who wish to participate in its activities.

All youth workers will be made aware of the contents of this policy as part of the induction process.

The management committee will be active in making sure all of its policies and procedures are fair and no member is disadvantaged when participating in the activities the organisation provides.

Westgate Youth Project is also aware of how people can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds and take many forms. Harassment is a physical, verbal or non verbal action which is unwelcome, unwanted and offensive to the recipient and has the effect of violating their dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere for that person. This can include embarrassing or offensive jokes, unwelcome physical contact or sexual advances, the expression of racist or homophobic views etc, lewd comments and innuendo, and sending offensive message via mobile phones, email and social media.

The management committee is responsible for implementing this policy and upholding its principles in everything it does.

### **Procedures**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, Westgate Youth Project applies the following definitions in application of this policy:

#### **Direct discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances because of a protected characteristic.

#### **Perceptive discrimination**

This 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.

#### **Associative discrimination**

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses any one or more of the protected characteristics.

#### **Indirect discrimination**

Indirect discrimination can happen when there is a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Employers can only justify indirect discrimination if they can show they acted fairly and reasonably in managing their business (e.g. in order to achieve a legitimate aim) and they would need to show that they had considered other less discriminatory alternatives. Like direct discrimination, indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not, unless it can be justified.

#### **Victimisation**

Victimisation is when a person is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. A person is not protected if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

## **Harassment**

The law defines harassment as ‘unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.’”

## **Sexual Harassment**

This is unwanted behaviour which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. A person should not be treated less favourably because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

## **Third Party Harassment**

This is where employers could potentially be liable if someone other than a member of staff (a third party such as a customer or client) harasses an employee. However it would need to have happened on at least two previous occasions, the employer would need to be aware it had taken place and a claim of harassment could only be justified if the employer had not taken reasonable steps to prevent it happening again.

## **Westgate Youth Project will make sure that:**

- We promote respect for other people and treat everyone fairly
- We inform our staff and volunteers of their responsibilities and opportunities under the Equalities Act 2010. We will make sure that the Westgate Youth Project Equalities Policy is circulated to all staff and volunteers and will provide appropriate training
- Young people and adults are able to meet together in a positive and accepting environment where they are safe from harm, abuse, harassment and intimidation
- Young people and adults recognise and challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Everyone has an equal opportunity to be considered as a youth worker
- All youth workers have equal access to training opportunities
- All young people will have equal access to organisation activities and training opportunities
- The policy is applied whether recruiting volunteers or paid staff
- We monitor what we do to meet any legal requirements
- We take incidents, including those of harassment and bullying, seriously
- Any issues of inequality, harassment or discrimination should be reported to the Youth Work Manager and the Chair of the Committee, who will enable the parties involved to give their version of events before considering further action

- The Youth Work Manager will respond quickly and impartially to such issues after consulting with the Chair of the Committee and by taking advice from relevant organisations such as Young Kent.

This policy was adopted at the Management Committee Meeting on:

.....(date)

On behalf of the Management Committee:

.....(signature)