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Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This version approved by NWWT Board of Trustees 4th December 2024, and comments at that meeting incorporated.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) prides itself in its proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) which stems from the Social Model of Inclusion.

The Social Model takes the focus away from the individual and gives it to the environment (this could be a person, policy or place), with the belief that it is environmental barriers that cause a person to become disadvantaged. NWWT has the opportunity to remove such barriers and promote barrier free design, by assessing all aspects of our work for the impact on equalities, making reasonable adjustments, providing training, and incorporating aids and adaptations to promote inclusion. Although this model was originally designed with disability in mind (the social model of disability), the general principals have been revised to prevent the discrimination of those with other protected characteristics.

With the belief that discrimination has no place within NWWT, this Policy provides a clear and strong direction so that our trustees, staff, volunteers, members, partners and stakeholders know what to expect from us and recognise the importance of ensuring the principals of EDI inform key decision-making at every level within NWWT.

- 1.2 This Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is a public statement of our objectives and approach. This document, which we refer to as the Policy, has been developed to ensure we meet the requirements of the relevant Equality Law. The relevant piece of legislation is; The Equalities Act 2010 which covers England, Wales and Scotland.
- 1.3 As this Policy is specifically written for NWWT based in Wales, we will be referring to the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.4 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is also relevant, and gives a legally-binding common purpose – the 7 well-being goals, (one of which is “a more equal Wales”) for public bodies. It details the ways in which specified public bodies must work, and work together to improve the well-being of Wales.
- 1.5 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

This Policy contributes to our commitment to EDI with specific focus on: -

- Reinforcing NWWT's responsibility under both the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, and our role as leaders, service provider, employer and purchaser of goods and services.
- Developing an action plan to help us ensure equality of opportunity across all sections of the workforce, and to ensure our services to all stakeholders are provided fairly and without discrimination.

- Promoting EDI across our trustees and staff, to ensure the removal of unfair discrimination, disadvantage, and harassment. Also, to foster good relations in the workplace and between different groups.
- Educating trustees and staff at all levels to approach their work with an open mind and to offer support and assistance to others without making decisions based on preconceptions.
- Noting that the decline in nature will not be addressed effectively without innovative thinking from a wide diversity of people, and that access to nature should be for everyone.

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2. DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

2.1 WHAT ARE EQUALITY AND EQUITY?

Equality and Equity are both concepts that relate to fairness, but they are different.

Equality assumes the objective is to treat everyone the same regardless of their starting point or their needs. A shortcoming of this approach is that it can be blind to disadvantages of different members in our communities and in doing so can perpetuate disparities.

Equity on the other hand gives consideration to the different starting points for different individuals and therefore aims to achieve fairness by providing resources according to need. Equity acknowledges the disadvantages that different cultural and social groups may have been subjected to and strives to reduce barriers.

2.2 WHAT IS DIVERSITY

This refers to the differences which exist between each of us and recognising the value of difference. It's about understanding each other and truly embracing the intersectionality of every individual.

Diversity is about valuing different identities, knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences, and using these differences to create an effective and innovative workforce to increase our effectiveness as a movement.

2.3 DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

This refers to when a person is treated less fairly, due to a perceived difference they may have. For example, Rhys, a senior manager turns down Sian's application for promotion as a supervisor. Sian, who is a lesbian, learns this is because Rhys believes the team she applied to manage are homophobic. Rhys thought Sian's sexual orientation would prevent her from gaining the team's respect and managing them effectively. This is direct sexual orientation discrimination against Sian.

2.4 INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

This occurs when, for example, a rule is applied fairly to all but in fact, the ability of one group to respond to that rule, is much greater than the ability of another. An example of

this might be a rule that everyone should apply for something via the internet. This could exclude the older generation who may not have internet access or computer skills.

2.5 POSITIVE ACTION

This refers to certain actions taken to attempt to put right an imbalance in the makeup of a workforce or to offer traineeships/training opportunities to a specific minority group. For example, an organisation may wish to employ more individuals with a disability or those who align themselves as from minority ethnic communities, in order to have a more diverse workforce. This will therefore encourage people from these protected groups to apply for vacancies, e.g., disabled people are guaranteed an interview if they meet all the essential criteria. If you then have a decision to make between two equally qualified and suitable candidates, you can use positive action to choose the candidate that holds the specific characteristic you are looking for.

2.6 DISCRIMINATION BY ASSOCIATION

This is a form of discrimination which occurs when one person has a protected characteristic, but another person is treated negatively from knowing them. For example, you could be discriminated against because you have a family member or a friend who has a disability. For example, Mair works as a project manager and is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after she tells her boss that her mother, who lives at home, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination against Mair because of her association with a disabled person.

2.7 DISCRIMINATION BY PERCEPTION

This refers to discrimination because you believe a person has a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually have that characteristic. For example, Pedr is 45 but looks much younger. Many people assume he is in his mid-20s. He is not allowed to represent his company at an international meeting because the managing director thinks he is too young. Pedr has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic.

2.8 HUMAN RIGHTS

Whilst the Human Rights Act 1998 does not apply directly to NWWT, respecting Human Rights across the organisation is best practice and will be encouraged. Every person in the world has basic human rights and freedoms. Human rights are based on core principles such as dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence and are protected by law under the Human Rights Act 1998.

3. APPROACH

Research shows that no one is completely free from prejudice. Prejudices manifest themselves during the early years and are influenced by family, the community and the media. We understand this and as such all our staff will undertake bespoke equality training to help them recognise their prejudices and overcome them, as we are aware that prejudice can lead to discrimination.

Although the Equality Act 2010 details nine protected characteristics, NWWT understand that our trustees and employees, do not have to disclose that they hold a specific characteristic. NWWT also understands that people who share the same characteristic often have very different needs, and as such our training also covers asking open questions and offering support if required, without assuming the type of support that may be needed.

NWWT will not 'pigeonhole' people into single protected characteristic groups, and will always seek to support each protected characteristic equally. Although not covered in the Equality Act 2010, we also include geographical inequality and social inequality in our work.

3.1 EQUITY STATEMENT

The Equity Statement has been written to help us promote and advance equality, and diversity as part of everything we do.

The loss of nature, environmental degradation and climate change are complex and interconnected problems, which will not be fixed without a high degree of innovative thinking. To create the space for innovation we need people who think differently to come together, with their different backgrounds, beliefs, experiences, ideas, and outlooks.

Access to nature, clean water, clean air are fundamental ingredients of a healthy life. We are a charity and the beneficiaries of all we do are people. We will actively work to ensure all our beneficiaries benefit from our work and everything for which we stand. Access to nature should be for everyone.

Both point to us being more inclusive in our work, and to that end, we believe we should respect everyone, and demonstrate this through being proactive in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Over the next 5 years, our actions to achieve our Equity Statement include:

1. We understand the current diversity of the Trust, noting areas of underrepresentation, and taking a proactive approach to ensuring NWWT is a diverse organisation.
2. We work with internal and external networks to address all areas of underrepresentation and to adopt best practice.
3. We have a suite of training materials for trustees and staff to embed EDI across the organisation and ensure each person knows their responsibility
4. We have diverse & inclusive leadership who embrace the challenge of increasing our diversity and recognise the contribution diversity makes to our organisation and to wildlife.
5. We are increasing our diversity – we will become more relevant to more people by ensuring our staff and trustees, reflect the diversity of the communities in which we live and work, by increasing opportunities and reducing barriers for marginalised and underserved groups.
6. We are cultivating an inclusive movement –we will cultivate a culture where our staff and trustees celebrate difference, where everyone can be themselves, feel respected and able to contribute to their full potential.

7. We are communicating inclusively – the ways that we connect with our staff, volunteers, members and communities will be intentionally inclusive and nurture a sense of belonging. We will demonstrate solidarity for people from different backgrounds, abilities and identities, and ensure they are supported and inspired to change the natural world for the better.
8. We provide access and engagement for everyone - We will increase our engagement with diverse communities, to better understand and overcome barriers to accessing and engaging with nature and to ensure that everyone can benefit from the joy of wildlife in their daily lives.

3.2 OUR ROLES AS LEADERS

This Policy assists Key Staff and Line Managers, to fully meet the aims set out in the Equity Statement (see 3.1) and to fully realise the equality objectives of NWWT. All supporting documents, codes of practice, legislative information, monitoring and training will be aimed at helping all trustees and employees, to implement the policy effectively. These responsibilities are: -

- To provide leadership through Key Staff, who will work with the support of the CEO to create an EDI culture within NWWT.
- For all employees to embrace the principles of EDI and apply these to their everyday activities.
- Not to harass, abuse or bully any other employee or volunteer, on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- For the CEO to provide guidance to staff on equality and diversity law and be proactive in promoting EDI. The EDI Team at the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) will advise our staff on training, monitoring, service and policy reviews and support us in engaging with external partners as appropriate.

3.3 ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS

We want to encourage communication with people from different communities and make sure we do this in a way that prevents exclusion.

NWWT aims to: -

- Talk to people and listen to people in the way they find the easiest and best. We will also help others to do the same.
- Look at ways to raise the profile of EDI through targeted positive communications, EDI events, either as NWWT or working in partnership with other organisations. Invitations and publicity for events will clearly state the appropriate booking systems to request any facilities or services required.
- Continue to follow our [Welsh Language Scheme](#), through which NWWT has adopted the principle that in the conduct of its business in Wales it will treat the Welsh and Welsh languages on the basis of equality.
- Continue our commitment to the Wildlife Trusts' Cymraeg am Natur (CAN) group.
- Provide information upon request in a number of different formats or languages and offer to go through a document personally with someone to help them understand it. Alternative formats which may include easy read, large print, Braille and audio will be available on request. We will produce a version of this document in Easy Read by the end of September 2025.

- Continue to ensure, where possible that meetings and events are accessible. This includes providing, upon request, alternative formats for written documents, help with using a hearing loop system, level access, [accessible toilets](#), where possible assist with the provision with transport to and from the venue, and adequate emergency exit procedures.

4. Diversity Monitoring Process

Diversity monitoring is looking at the information that is collected about different groups of people. This will tell us how well EDI is embedded in the work we do. It is something we think is important for understanding our trustees and employees.

We support RSWT, who collect analyse and collate information from all the Wildlife Trusts covering age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This also includes information about levels of pay, information on applications for jobs and how successful different groups of people have been, staff who started and left the organisation and staff complaints.

The information is used to check if any group sharing a protected characteristic is being disadvantaged by any of NWWT employment policies or procedures. If this is the case, we will try and do things to reduce or prevent this disadvantage.

The RSWT Diversity Monitoring guide tells us how we can collect information on the protected characteristics. This information will be used to: -

- Understand how many people from different protected characteristics are employed by NWWT.
- Help understand what different groups think about our work and about what can be improved to meet their needs.

5. EMBEDDING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN ALL WE DO

5.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND WHAT THE LAW SAYS

NWWT want to be transparent regarding our work on EDI, as such we want to record how we meet relevant legislation. As NWWT is based in Wales the relevant legislation is the Equality Act 2010.

5.2 THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the equalities legislation, which sets out unlawful ways to treat someone. The law protects people from unfair discrimination on the grounds of nine protected characteristics: -

- 1 Age: relates to a person belonging to a particular age group (e.g. 32-year-olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30-year-olds).
- 2 Disability: defined as having a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' negative impact on your ability to do normal daily activities.
- 3 Sex: covers the 'characteristic' of being a man or of being a woman.

- 4 Gender Reassignment: the process of changing from one gender to another. This characteristic covers a person who is intending to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their gender by changing physiological or other traits of gender.
- 5 Marriage and Civil Partnership: Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
- 6 Pregnancy and Maternity: pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- 7 Race: refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.
- 8 Religion or Belief: religion refers to any religion or lack of religion and belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g., Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- 9 Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex, both sexes other.

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of any of these nine 'protected characteristics'. NWWT also recognise geographical and social inequalities.

5.3 CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

NWWT are also bound by the Charity Governance Code with section 6 relating to EDI.

Principle 6. Equality, diversity and inclusion.

The board has a clear, agreed and effective approach to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation and in its own practice. This approach supports good governance and the delivery of the organisation's charitable purposes.

Rationale

Addressing EDI helps a board to make better decisions. This requires commitment, but it means that a charity is more likely to stay relevant to those it serves and to deliver its public benefit. Recognising and countering any imbalances in power, perspectives and opportunities in the charity, and in the attitudes and behaviour of trustees, staff and volunteers, helps to make sure that a charity achieves its aims.

All trustees have the same responsibility for the charity, so they must have equal opportunity to contribute to decision making. Board diversity, in the widest sense, is important because it creates more balanced decision making. Where appropriate, this includes and centres the communities and people the charity serves. This increases the charity's legitimacy and impact. EDI are only effective and sustainable if the board works to be inclusive, ensuring that all trustees are welcomed, valued and able to contribute.

Boards that commit to EDI are more likely to set a positive example and tone for the charity by following an appropriate strategy for delivering its purpose and setting inclusive values and culture.

5.4 ASSESSING IMPACT

NWWT wants to ensure that it has paid due regard to the needs of all involved with its work, from trustees to employees, and has not without knowing or by mistake, disadvantaged or discriminated against any protected group.

5.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

- Use RSWT's Equality Impact Matrix form to do a risk-based analysis, to assess services, functions, projects and policies, for their likely or actual effect on people with respect to EDI.
- Ensure the impact process is robust and supported with a guidance document, which meets the legal requirements and ensure staff are trained on how to complete the new Equality Impact Matrix form.
- Actions arising from equality analysis and assessments will be reflected in relevant staff work plans.

5.6 EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

NWWT is committed to all aspects of equal opportunities in employment, including fair employment and equal pay policy.

NWWT:

- Promotes opportunities to ensure its workforce is diverse and representative of the local community.
- Ensures jobs are accessible to people from all sections of the community.
- Ensures all applicants for posts are aware of our equalities policies and of their right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Ensures employees are treated equitably in all areas of employment, including career development, pay, training and promotion.
- Addresses harassment and bullying in the workplace.
- Will seek to improve consultation with staff from the protected groups.
- Continually reviews human resource policies to assess their impact on the protected groups covered by the policy.
- Monitors recruitment, promotion, training, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit interviews from employment.

5.7 EQUALITIES LINKED TO EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

There are a wide range of policies to support people who work for us and future employees. These policies let staff know what is expected from them as employees and what they can expect from NWWT as an employer. Equality monitoring starts at the point of application and continues through to minimise any unconscious bias and to help us achieve a workforce that is representative.

NWWT staff are active in promoting and supporting diversity in the workforce. This includes:

- Making sure we are fair in what we pay people, through having a non-discriminatory job evaluation scheme;
- Making sure bullying and harassment doesn't happen in the workplace;

- Supporting employees in making sure they have a good balance of work life and home life (work-life balance).

NWWT understands the law in respect of reasonable adjustments and our duty as an employer to take such steps as are reasonable to prevent any practice, policy, physical feature of the workplace or any other arrangements being made, which places a disabled employee or applicant at a disadvantage compared to a non-disabled employee or applicant.

5.8 TRAINING

NWWT will ensure trustees and employees undertake regular training (e.g. every 3 years, mandatory as part of the induction process) on EDI so they understand what their responsibilities are, how a diversity of people working for nature supports nature's recovery, and how best to prevent discrimination.

5.9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN PROCUREMENT

NWWT procurement processes includes promotion of equality of opportunity for businesses and staff alike. For each procurement process the procurement team will endeavour to understand the equality impact of the proposed purchase or contract, so that the process being used ensures that the supplier understands and is capable of delivering their duties in respect of equality.

Exactly what is undertaken will be specific to the activity but may include evaluation of supplier policy, understanding of how that policy is implemented and communicated, and how a supplier measures its demographics against the communities it serves.

5.10 ENGAGING AND CONSULTING WITH COMMUNITIES

NWWT understand that it is important to talk to people from communities that are underrepresented at NWWT, to understand what they need from us in order to provide the opportunity to join us.

NWWT will: -

- Help people who may be disadvantaged due to a protected characteristic, geographical or social deprivation to take part in activities in their community, and to have their say in consultations about the decisions NWWT makes about its work and how they may be affected. This could be through: surveys, questionnaires, focus groups or open meetings.
- Represent these communities at meetings to make sure the views of the community are heard.
- Listen to the opinions and complaints of individuals, local fora, community groups and partners to ensure feedback is considered in service provision and policy development.
- Working with other environmental organisations and keeping abreast of new developments that could help us achieve our aims.
- Feedback the results of engagement and consultation to all involved.

5.11 GROUPS TO PROMOTE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Wales Environment Link: This group provides an EDI network for environmental organisations to help with best practice, and Wildlife Trusts Wales attend.

Staff Networks: These groups (e.g. NWWT EDI Development Group, Wildlife Trust group “Out for Nature”) play an important role in shaping policies and employment initiatives, whilst supporting and responding to issues raised by their group.

RSWT has an online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group on Wildnet through which we gain access to advice, guidance, and training.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 POLICY SUMMARY

The Policy recognises the constant diversity changes happening within our sector and our organisation, and as such NWWT is committed to continually reviewing and improving existing structures and practices. There is a firm commitment to provide equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination, harassment, hate and disadvantage and to fostering good relations. We are also committed to achieving the highest equity standards in all aspects of our work, including decision-making and employment practice.

The focus of all aspects of EDI is our aim to fulfil the actions to achieve our Equity Statement (3.1).

6.2 PUBLISHING THE RESULTS

We recognise the importance of not only communicating our clear commitment to EDI but also the importance of keeping people regularly informed of the progress being made and the outcomes being achieved. This includes opportunities for people to take part in this work and help contribute to the improvements NWWT is seeking.

To help keep people informed we will: -

- Share results with our trustees, employees, and volunteers.
- Publish information on NWWT website about the Trust’s work to progress its overall equalities agenda.
- Provide a contact for more information on our website.

6.3 EQUITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

An Action Plan will be developed from the actions and commitments detailed in this Policy with a view to achieving our Equity Statement.

The purpose of the plan is to: -

- Ensure NWWT maintain and improves its standards in EDI in a timely manner.
- Ensure NWWT maintains its focus to give ‘due regard’ to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.