

St Osyth Museum / St Osyth Historical Society

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY SOHS 5

This document sets out St Osyth Historical Society's / St Osyth Museum's policy on equality and diversity for its volunteers and those who use our services or visit our Museum. It defines why equality and diversity are important, what the basic principles we will follow are and how we intend to achieve this.

Any reference in this document to 'the Museum' or St Osyth Museum refers to both St Osyth Museum and St Osyth Historical Society.

The St Osyth Historical Society and the St Osyth Museum do not employ any staff and is entirely managed by volunteers.

The Museum recognises the positive benefits of the implementation of an Equality and Diversity Policy.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that all volunteers and visitors are treated in a fair and equitable manner regardless of their colour, race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, sexuality, disability, age, any illness or infection, social background, or organisation role.

We value the differences, needs and contributions a diverse volunteer force and visitor base represents.

The Museum places an obligation upon all volunteers to respect and act in accordance with this policy. We are committed to providing information on equality and diversity for all our volunteers.

The Museum extends this positive attitude in respect of equality and diversity to our contractors, service users and the community.

We will:

- promote equality and diversity.
- challenge and eradicate discrimination.
- provide responsive and accessible services.

Within the overall framework of its statement of purpose and values, the Museum is committed to the principle and practice of equal opportunities and celebrates the diversity of people.

The Museum believes that equalising opportunity not only meets legal and social responsibilities, but also promotes organisational effectiveness and improves the quality of working life.

All volunteers will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for volunteering, supervision, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential.

DEFINITIONS

Equality is creating an even platform to enable everyone to access the same opportunities and is backed by legislation to prevent discrimination based on prejudices against any group.

Diversity is understanding and valuing the differences in people and believing that harnessing these differences will create a productive working environment and an enriching life experience where talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are met.

Valuing diversity means valuing the qualities that different people bring to their positions, to the resolution of problems and to the development of opportunities - rather than judging people's ideas by the extent to which they conform to our existing values or personal preference.

Managing diversity means recognising that our volunteers and those who use our services are from differing social, cultural, ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds and have different religions or beliefs, nationalities, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, physical and mental abilities.

In practice this means that we are committed to:

- giving all volunteers the chance to achieve their full potential by striving to eliminate unfairness, discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying at the Museum or on outreach projects.
- dealing with volunteers solely on the basis of merit and without prejudice, thus ensuring fair, reasonable and dignified treatment for all in:
 - selection
 - appraisals
 - access to training
 - task allocation
 - grievance and disciplinary matters
- providing support and encouragement to all volunteers to enable them to give of their best, but with special consideration for members of staff and volunteers with particular needs such as those with additional responsibilities at home or with disabilities.
- treating persons employed by others (outside contractors) in a professional manner and making sure they are not harassed, bullied or discriminated against.

THE AIM OF OUR POLICY

- To ensure all volunteers are afforded equality of opportunity.

- To attract a diverse volunteer force and utilise the skills, knowledge and abilities available.
- To create a positive image as a Museum and service provider.
- To increase performance and efficiency, and prevent disciplinary and grievance cases.
- To have zero tolerance of breaches of our Equality and Diversity Policy. All instances of alleged misbehaviour will be investigated under our disciplinary procedures.
- To recognise the diversity of the residents of, and visitors to, Essex and their diverse backgrounds, culture and needs and ensure that services are delivered appropriately to maximise participation by all.
- To endeavour to remove any barriers to access the services we provide.

WHAT WE WILL DO

The Museum will uphold equality and diversity by:

- Ensuring that no volunteer or is unfairly discriminated against on the basis of their colour, race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, sexuality, disability, age, or any illness or infection, social background, or organisation role;
- Ensuring that service delivery, will be appropriate, sensitive, impartial and accessible to all;
- Fostering a co-operative volunteering environment which is free from harassment or victimisation and which promotes good relations among volunteers to create the conditions for the full development of their potential.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

Gender

The Museum will take action to promote gender equality.

- We will never use gender as the basis for making volunteer recruitment decisions.
- We will ensure that we do not apply any direct or indirect discrimination to our visitors or volunteers on the basis of gender and marital/civil partnership status.

Sexual Orientation

The Museum is committed to creating a safe environment for all its volunteers, visitors and service users with due regard to their sexual orientation.

We want the Museum to be a place where people who are lesbian, gay and bisexual among our, volunteers and visitors feel it is safe and comfortable to be open about their sexual orientation.

Disabled People

The Museum recognises that people are not necessarily disabled by their impairments, but the way in which they are discriminated against by society (the social model of disability).

Therefore the Museum will:

- Review the Disability Access of the Museum.
- Increase awareness in the organisation about the needs of volunteers, users and visitors with disabilities.
- Work to ensure our practices do not restrict use of our services or the contribution people with disabilities can make to our work.
- Continue to assess the accessibility of the Museum site and actively seek opportunities to improve access to our premises' and services for people who have disabilities.
- Recognise that disabilities may not always be visible and equally respect the wider needs of this group including individuals with mental health or debilitating conditions such as MS or AIDS.

Race and Ethnicity

The Museum serves people from a diverse range of racial, national and ethnic groups. The Museum is committed to promoting a cohesive society and eliminating racial discrimination. The Museum will encourage good relations between people of different racial, national and ethnic groups and challenge negative views/actions.

Religion and Belief

The Museum is committed to creating a safe working environment for all its volunteers and service users with due regard to their religions or beliefs.

We want the Museum to be a place where all volunteers and visitors who adhere to different religions or beliefs feel it is safe and comfortable to be open about their religion or belief. We will challenge negative views and practices.

Age

The Museum will continue to employ and serve people of all age groups and will ensure its policies do not adversely affect staff or services users because of their age.

We will ensure that we do not unfairly discriminate in the appointment of volunteers or the provision of services on grounds of age, both old and young.

Procurement

The Museum will strive to ensure that the purchase of goods, services and facilities is undertaken in line with our equality and diversity commitments. We want to engage with a diverse range of suppliers and ensure that businesses from diverse communities have an equal opportunity of competing for our contracts. We will endeavour wherever practicable to purchase from agencies or companies who share our values on equality of opportunity and diversity.

Training

The Museum will circulate this policy to all volunteers. Training on the contents of the policy will be given from time to time as required. All new members of staff and volunteers will be trained on this policy as part of their induction process.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?

The Responsible Person has overall responsibility for equality of opportunity within the organisation.

The Responsible Person is responsible for ensuring the Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented in the organisation; for ensuring volunteers understand the policy and their roles within it; and for providing reports and monitoring information.

Every volunteer has an individual responsibility to ensure this policy is actively implemented. This should be reflected in the development of individual work programmes which take account of the needs of all potential users of services. It should also be reflected in individuals' performance and conduct.

This policy will be circulated to all Museum volunteers, all candidates applying to be volunteers with the Museum and all contractors. This policy will be made available on our web site.

The Museum actively encourages individual volunteers who feel that they have in any way suffered from, been disadvantaged by, been discriminated against unlawfully, or has been subjected to harassment to report these incidents to the Responsible Person or member of the Museum Management Committee. In the same way, volunteers who witness an act of discrimination or harassment against a fellow volunteer and/or visitor should report this to the Responsible Person or member of the Museum Management Committee. Volunteers can also raise any concerns they have at committee meetings.

The Museum recognises that it is important that volunteers raise any concerns they have about equality and diversity issues – even if they have not

yet become actual 'incidents'. In some situations it may be possible to prevent a 'concern' becoming an 'incident' through taking early action.

Any volunteer found to have acted in a discriminatory way in relation to colleagues, volunteers or visitors to the Museum will be dealt with in accordance with the Museum's disciplinary procedure.

Responsible Person

The Responsible Person referred to in this document is;

Nigel Jeskins

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