

## **Guildford Health Walks Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

Guildford Health Walks is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our volunteers and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our volunteer force to be truly representative of all sections of society and our walkers, and for each volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best.

Guildford Health Walks, in providing walk events - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of people attending our walks.

### **Our policy's purpose**

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all our volunteers, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:

age

disability

gender reassignment

marriage and civil partnership

pregnancy and maternity

race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)

religion or belief

sex

sexual orientation

3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:

dealing with grievances and discipline

Guildford Health Walks commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our volunteers.
2. Create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training our volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include volunteers conducting themselves to help Guildford Health Walks provide equal opportunities and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All volunteers should understand they, as well as Guildford Health Walks, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their volunteering, against fellow volunteers or walkers.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow volunteers, walkers, and any others in the course of the Guildford Health Walk's activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under Guildford Health Walk's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all volunteers, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of Guildford Health Walks.

5. Make decisions concerning volunteers being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

6. Review volunteer practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

7. Monitor the make-up of the volunteer force regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

### Agreement to follow this policy

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by the Guildford Health Walks Committee.

### Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

If a volunteer has a grievance, this should in the first instance be raised with their walk group coordinator, who will report the matter to the Volunteer Manager who will make an appointment to discuss the matter further and take the necessary action.