



Equality and Diversity Policy

**Market House
14 Market Street
Lerwick**

A charitable company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 165677
Registered Office Market House, 14 Market Street, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0JP
Company Secretary Catherine Hughson
Recognised by the Inland Revenue as a Scottish Charity - No. SCO 17286

Voluntary Action Shetland

EQUALITY AND DIVERISTY POLICY

Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for its employees, volunteers and people in need in the community to whom services are provided. This means that we at VAS will strive to safeguard those who may face inequality or harassment due to one or more of the nine 'protected characteristics'.

VAS and our membership organisations undertake to treat all applicants for positions equally and in all we do including in the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of employees and volunteers, and in the provision of our services to the community, equally and will not discriminate on the ground of any protected characteristics.

The nine protected Characteristics are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Sex (gender)
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Gender reassignment
8. Marriage or civil partnership
9. Pregnancy and Maternity

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. VAS will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, contractor, job applicant, volunteer or visitor because of a protected characteristic.

We are opposed to, and will seek to eliminate all forms of unlawful and unnecessary discrimination, and will comply fully either provisions of the key Equal Opportunities legislation and the recommendations of Associated Codes of Practice.

Equality and Diversity policy and practice will play a fundamental role in the recruitment/selection of staff and volunteers, and in their training and supervision. Monitoring and evaluation during the recruitment process will be a vital component in the ongoing assessment of the success and impact of equal opportunity policy and practice.

We recognise that promoting equality and diversity is an ongoing commitment and therefore this policy and all systems and procedures associated with this policy will be subject to monitoring and review.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG Scheme)

People who work or volunteer with children and protected adults may be required to become members of the PVG Scheme.

VAS complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by Scottish Ministers, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by Disclosure Scotland under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing applicants' suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against a scheme member on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Where a position is regulated work (as defined by the PVG Scheme) we will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.

At interview we will ensure that open and measured discussions can take place on the subject of offences. Failure to reveal information at interview, which is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

At interview or when receiving a scheme record which shows a conviction, we will take into consideration:-

- whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered;
- the seriousness of the offence revealed;
- the length of time since the offence took place;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behavior;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place.

VAS will take advice from a child protection advisor.

We will ensure that all our staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

Positive About Disabled People

Where a disabled applicant meets the requirements of a vacancy (as stated in the job specification) they will be guaranteed an interview, along with other suitable applicants.

Raising a Complaint

Employees who feel they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with the executive officer. If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the employee should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal grievance under the VAS Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

We undertake to make a copy of this policy available to any applicant for a post with membership organisations of VAS that requires a disclosure.

Breaches of the equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees (up to and including dismissal), appropriate action against a member of the management board, termination of contacts for services of consultants or trainers, or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.