

Equality & Diversity

This induction video will cover equality and diversity.

Society is made up of people from different backgrounds, needs and perceptions. It includes people of all genders, people of different races, from different ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, trans people, people of different religions, faiths and philosophies including those who do not adhere to a faith, people of all ages, from different economic backgrounds, and those with caring responsibilities.

Each and every one of us have the right to feel equal and have our diversity valued. Everyone needs to play their part in creating a culture of inclusion.

What is meant by Equality? Equality is about ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity and are not discriminated against because of their characteristics. Although we often think about discrimination in terms of employment, it also concerns how we are treated and the way we treat others. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, it is about treating everyone fairly, with respect and recognising that people from different backgrounds may have needs that are met in different ways.

What is meant by Diversity? Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences. Diversity challenges us to recognise and value all sorts of differences that exist when people work together in order to build stronger communities. People come from a wide variety of backgrounds and we can be different from one another in many different ways. These can include differences that are highlighted in current equality legislation such as race, religion and gender but also include things like our individual personality, interests and lifestyle choices, such as being a vegetarian or a smoker. For many people their sense of who they are is influenced by belonging to one or more diversity identities. People who share a diversity identity are not the same. Even when we belong to the same diversity identity as one another, we are still individuals shaped by different life experiences.

Inclusion is ensuring all can take advantage and participate.

Why are Equality and Diversity important? Equality, diversity and inclusion apply to all of us, both in terms of our obligations and our individual needs. We live in an increasingly diverse community and need to be able to understand, respect and respond appropriately to difference in others. Volunteers and the people who benefit from your help reflect this diversity in many ways, this includes ethnic and community background, gender, religion, political opinion, disability, sexuality and age. Understanding equality and diversity will provide a harmonious environment for all. It will ensure that volunteers, staff and service users are all valued, respected and treated fairly. We all have the right to be protected from discrimination and harassment. We also have a responsibility not to discriminate against others.

How should I behave? You should treat people as you expect to be treated; never behave towards someone in a way that is hostile, offensive or humiliating.

You should treat people as individuals; respecting their identity even when it is different to your own and being aware that what a person finds acceptable, another may find offensive.

You should not make offensive or insulting remarks, or engage in 'jokes' or 'banter' about people based on their age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, trans status, or political beliefs. If you become aware of behaviour like this, you should challenge it calmly.

You should not avoid someone simply because they are different to you. Equally, be respectful of people's choices.

If you are worried you may have said or done something to make someone feel uncomfortable, it is ok to ask them respectfully if you have done so.

If you are challenged about your behaviour or language, you should accept feedback in a positive way.

If you feel that the language or behaviour of others is offensive and/or it is upsetting you, please seek advice or support from your supervisor to help you decide how you want to deal with it.

Once you've talked things over, you might decide that the best way forward is to speak to the person in a quiet place – you will be supported to do so.

If you do not feel things are being resolved, the organisation you are volunteering with will have a formal complaint policy that you can follow.

Each and every one of us has a role to play in ensuring equality and diversity in our community.

Thank you for listening to the equality and diversity section of your induction. Please ensure to watch all the other videos and do get in contact should you have any questions.

Email: info@volunteeringdorset.org.uk

Phone: 01305 269214

