

Scotswood Natural Community Garden Equality and Diversity Policy

Date approved: 4 December 2012
Approved by: Board of Trustees
Last Review Date: Mar 2025
Next Review Date: Mar 2026

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Vision

For everyone who comes to Scotswood Garden to feel welcomed, respected, listened to, safe, valued and supported.

About This Policy

We are committed to being an equitable, diverse and inclusive organisation.

This means:

- being fair, impartial and providing equal employment opportunities
- recognising, respecting and celebrating our differences
- creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued

This policy helps us put this commitment into practice. It sets out:

- definitions for key terms used throughout the policy
- the law and equity, diversity and inclusion
- our commitment to prospective and current employees
- responsibilities of our employees and volunteers
- how we work with service users, suppliers and others
- how we'll monitor and review this policy

1. EDI Statement

Scotswood Natural Community Garden aims to promote equity, diversity and inclusion as an employer and seeks to ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion principles underpin all areas of the organisation's work and service provision.

Our EDI Strategy ensures that we are continually looking to improve and evolve to ensure that EDI is at the forefront of all of our work.

[EDI Strategy 2024-2027.docx -](#)

Scotswood Natural Community Garden recognises that many people and groups suffer discrimination and face serious barriers when trying to fulfil their true potential. It also recognises that not all forms of unreasonable and unfair discrimination are the subject of legislation. It is the aim of this organisation to take positive steps to redress discrimination, to improve equity of opportunity and to combat any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reasons not directly related to their ability to do a job for this organisation or to their eligibility to receive services from us.

In most cases it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of protected characteristics. A protected characteristic is a human characteristic that is safeguarded against discrimination by law. There are 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act:

- age
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

However we recognise that people may experience discrimination for many additional social, educational and economic reasons such as their language, health, caring responsibilities, trade union activity, where they live, how they speak and whether they work flexibly. This policy will apply equally to all these circumstances.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or abuse of people who are members of staff or of people connected with the services provided by Scotswood Natural Community Garden.

2. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Direct discrimination is where someone's treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination may be lawful when a particular protected characteristic is essential for a role (when it's an occupational requirement).

Indirect discrimination means putting in place a rule, policy, or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one (when this cannot be objectively justified).

Harassment is where someone receives unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic that violates their dignity or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This counts as harassment regardless of whether the person responsible intended harm.

Associative discrimination is where someone experiences discrimination because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic (for example, the parent of a disabled child).

Perceptive discrimination is where someone experiences discrimination because they're perceived to have a protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment is where an employee is harassed by someone who comes into contact with their organisation, due to a protected characteristic. Some examples of third parties include service users, suppliers and staff from partner organisations.

Victimisation is where someone's treated less favourably because they've taken action relating to the Equality Act, or are suspected of doing so. For example, they may have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Act. Employees are not protected from victimisation if they act maliciously or make or support a false complaint in bad faith.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where an organisation fails to remove or reduce the barriers someone faces at work because of a protected characteristic. Under the Equality Act, workplaces are legally required to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities. It's best practice to provide similar support for people with other protected characteristics too. Examples include introducing gender neutral toilets and allowing staff to take time to pray during the working day.

3. Reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is a change to remove or reduce the effect of:

- an employee's disability so they can do their job
- a job applicant's disability when applying for a job.

What's deemed 'reasonable' will depend on the circumstances of each case.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- making changes to someone's physical working environment changing the ways things are done
- providing an employee or job applicant with extra equipment or assistance.

When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, we'll consider:

- how effective the change will be in reducing the disadvantage the employee would otherwise experience
- its practicality
- the cost
- our resources
- the availability of financial support

As far as possible, we'll aim to remove or reduce any substantial disadvantage a disabled employee or job applicant faces, which would not be faced by a non-disabled person.

4. The Law and EDI

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly during recruitment or employment because of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination after employment can also be unlawful. For example, it's unlawful to refuse someone a reference for a reason linked to a protected characteristic.

It's also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user when providing services or goods, or to fail to make reasonable adjustments.

5. Management of this policy and responsibilities

Scotswood Natural Community Garden's Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the EDI policy. It is however the responsibility of the CEO and senior management team to implement, monitor and evaluate this policy in terms of employment practice and service delivery. The CEO is also under a duty to ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly kept informed of the policy's implementation and the implications of the Board of Trustees decisions and policies for EDI issues. It is the responsibility of all staff to report any discrimination of which they become aware.

All employees, Board of Trustee members, and other volunteers will be informed that an EDI policy is in operation and that they are bound to comply with its requirements. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of Scotswood Natural Community Garden's members, funding agencies, job applicants and those using the services of Scotswood Natural Community Garden.

The 'EDI Vision' shall be easily available in our offices, accessible to staff and visitors. Staff and trustees are to be given access to the whole policy and the EDI strategy upon appointment/election and whenever the policy is modified.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden's grievance and disciplinary procedures will be used to deal with any complaints about discrimination, harassment or bullying involving staff or volunteers.

Complaints from people using the organisation's services will be through the complaints procedure for Scotswood Natural Community Garden.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden seeks a broad and representative Board of Trustees.

It is expected that when staff or Trustees represent Scotswood Natural Community Garden on the committees of other agencies they will endeavour to ensure that EDI principles and practices are adopted by those agencies.

3. Employment practices

Scotswood Natural Community Garden aims to promote EDI as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of the policy.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden regards discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, clients or of others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct. Condoning such behaviour could also be treated as a disciplinary offence. As well as disciplining the perpetrator(s), we will give appropriate support to people who complain of harassment of themselves or others.

Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices generally will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the EDI policy. In particular, selection and recruitment procedures should be reviewed no less than biannually in order to try and constantly improve EDI practices.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will attempt to accommodate staff requests to work flexibly, whether part-time or some other working arrangement, for whatever reason, so long as agreement is consistent with the needs of the organisation. (See related policy: home working)

We accept our obligation not to discriminate against applicants and employees on the basis of their religion or belief. We will try to accommodate employees' religious beliefs in any way which is compatible with the work of the organisation by, for example, allowing for prayers during the working day and at the workplace; considering employees' dietary requirements in providing facilities for staff to eat and store food; allowing staff to take their holidays for religious festivals; trying to arrange job interviews or other important work meetings at times when they do not clash with important religious festivals; and not imposing a dress code with which people of a particular religion cannot comply.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will not discriminate on grounds of age in recruitment, promotion, training, or in the availability of benefits such as pension contributions or health insurance.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will take whatever positive action is required where it can be shown that under-representation of any particular group has occurred in recruitment. Where appropriate and where legally permissible, employees from under-represented groups will be given training and encouragement in order to promote equality and diversity within Scotswood Natural Community Garden.

4. Service delivery

Scotswood Natural Community Garden seeks to ensure that its services are accessible to all sections of the community served by Scotswood Natural Community Garden. In particular Scotswood Natural Community Garden will ensure that this applies to those most at social, economic or educational disadvantage.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will make public its commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will adopt a Complaints Procedure that will include its objectives with regard to equality and diversity in service delivery.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will attempt to find ways of making our service accessible to everyone, including people for whom English is not a first language, people

with visual or hearing impairments, and people who live in remote rural areas and/or who cannot easily travel.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its activities are carried out in premises which are accessible to people with mobility difficulties. In the event that the premises operated by Scotswood Natural Community Garden are not accessible for particular individuals, Scotswood Natural Community Garden will arrange alternative meeting places. This will include committee meetings.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will be sensitive to the particular needs of service users by trying to provide for example, translations, childcare facilities run by vetted carers and, when providing food, having regard to religious and other dietary requirements.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will operate a variety of means to allow people to contact staff.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will be concerned especially with people and communities that are disadvantaged and excluded and will find ways to support the representation of their interests.

5. Monitoring and Reviewing this policy

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will monitor this policy annually and update if the law changes. We will also report any actions we take to improve EDI to our board of trustees and through our Annual Report.

Scotswood Natural Community Garden will be sensitive to groups and individuals and will have due regard for the principles of data protection when seeking information. Where sensitive information is gathered, those responding will be explicitly informed of the purpose and that they are at liberty to withhold the information. All monitoring information will be securely stored, aggregated and anonymised.

Related Policy: Data Protection & Confidentiality

Related Strategy: EDI Strategy

This Equality and Diversity Policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees of Scotswood Natural Community Garden at their meeting on 4 December 2012.

Signed by

Tony Milan

Chair of Trustees

4/12/2012

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Review Date	Amendments	Signed
2/3/17		Rob Higgins
5/6/18		Stephanie Cole
13/5/19		Stephanie Cole
9/12/20		Chris Francis
8/12/21	None -but agreed to a full organisational EDI review over the next 2 years	Chris Francis
	Review delayed to 2024 due to ongoing organisational review of EDI. Policy to be updated by December 2024.	
5/3/2025	Extensive amendments in line with EDI Strategic plan.	Helen McStravick