

Equality and Diversity

We aim to be an organisation that values, recognises and responds to the diverse needs of members and those we serve. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against any person or other organisation with particular reference to the protected characteristics.

Equality Act 2010

The Act brought together into one piece of legislation and replaced all previous discrimination legislation. It provides that a person shall not be discriminated against, i.e. treated less favourably, on grounds of nine protected characteristics. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Statement of Purpose

The Meridale Organisation is committed to meeting the needs and aspirations of users, volunteers and communities in a fair, respectful, and proportionate manner. Our approach to diversity and equality is to promote inclusiveness by recognising that anyone can make a positive difference in the achievement of the organisation's vision and in the wider society.

The content of this policy will be reflected in other key policies of the organisation.

Our Approach

- 1.1 The policy applies to everyone the organisation serves, who works for it, applies for work or who provides services to it. Diversity and equality are integral to all aspects of our activities.
- 1.2 We will comply with best practice from legal, regulatory and inspection requirements. Codes of Practice and other guidance will be used appropriately to ensure progress on diversity.
- 1.3 Meridale will not discriminate against, bully or victimise any person or organisation on grounds of, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants or any other protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

Principles

- 2.1 To demonstrate our commitment to diversity and equality, working in inclusive ways to eliminating all forms of discrimination whether covered in law or not.
- 2.2 To promote and encourage participation by all people on activities that enrich their lives so that they can express their needs and take a part in meeting those needs. Where barriers to participation exist, they must be challenged.

- 2.3 To recognise and celebrate the diversity that enriches communities and to encourage acceptance and tolerance of that diversity so that change may be pursued by using the skills and experience of the whole community
- 2.4 To maximise the opportunities for each person to realise their potential so they can be enabled and empowered to take control of their lives.
- 2.5 To raise awareness, recognise and celebrate our successes, forming a platform for continuous learning and improvement.
- 2.6 To have a greater and deeper understanding of our users enabling them to influence services and activities.
- 2.7 To listen to users and volunteers through a range of mechanisms to assess satisfaction levels across various groups to ensure parity of outcomes.
- 2.8 To have Trustees members, staff and volunteers that reflect the makeup of the communities we serve.
- 2.9 To ensure Trustees, staff and volunteers are supported and trained in knowledge and skills to deliver our policy on diversity and equality.

Declaration of Intent on Racism

Meridale recognises that England is a multi-racial society, and believes that cultural diversity positively enriches our society.

Meridale believes that no person or group should suffer disadvantages by reason of race or colour, and we declare our intention to work with others for the elimination of racial disadvantage and the promotion of racial justice.

In pursuit of its aims, Meridale resolves to undertake a continuing review of all its policy and practice, and will in particular:

- 3 Work to ensure that the services Meridale provides are relevant and accessible to racial and ethnic minority groups, including welcoming representation of these within our staffing, volunteering and user profiles.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Anyone representing Meridale must abide by all policies and procedures of the organisation. This ranges from any employees, Trustees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and those undertaking work experience. This list is not exhaustive.
- 4.2 The Trustees will ensure the policy is successful. Centre management staff will have professional, individual and collective responsibility to implement the policy. Contractors, consultants and partner organisations are required to demonstrate their commitment and action to share our policy objectives on diversity.

Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 5.1 The Centre Management Team will monitor progress on this policy, providing a focus internally for staff and volunteers, externally for Meridale users.

Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy, intended or accidental, is not acceptable. Infringements of this policy will be dealt with seriously as disciplinary matter under Meridale's normal disciplinary procedures and may involve either informal or formal action depending on the seriousness of the case.

Monitoring and Review

The Trustees will review this statement periodically and no later than three years from the date below.

Signed: (On behalf of the Meridale Organisation)

Name:

Position:

Date: