



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1) The West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust (WSRHT) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our volunteers, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.
- 2) The WSRHT recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the WSRHT and its volunteers, to utilise the skills of the total volunteer force. It is the aim of the WSRHT to ensure that no volunteer or **role** applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment on grounds of age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 3) All volunteers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for any promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources and will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 4) The aim is for the volunteers to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best. The organisation in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.
- 5) In implementing this Policy, the WSRHT's purpose is to provide equality, fairness and respect for all people and volunteers whether temporary, part-time or full-time.

The Trust will:

- 6) not unlawfully discriminate in accordance with 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.
- 7) oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination to the WSRHT volunteers. This includes:
 - The terms and conditions of volunteering.
 - Any payments or benefits awarded to volunteers by the WSRHT.

- Complaints against the WSRHT, its volunteers, its administration process, or its procedures.

8) Matters of Grievances and Discipline will be treated in accordance with the West Somerset Railway PLC policy (**HR-POL/017**). This can include:

- Dismissal.
- Redundancy.
- Leave for parents.
- Requests for flexible working.
- Selection for volunteering, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

The Trust will:

- encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the space where volunteering is carried out as they are good practice and make sense.
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all volunteers are recognised and valued.
- raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities of volunteers under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include volunteers conducting themselves to help the organisation prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- ensure all volunteers understand they, as well as the WSRHT, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their volunteering, against fellow volunteers, customers, suppliers and the public.
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow volunteers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the WSR PLC Grievance and Discipline policy (**HR-POL/017**), and appropriate action will be taken.

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; **this is a criminal offence**.

- 9) Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all volunteers, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 10) Make decisions concerning volunteers being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 11) Monitor the make-up of the volunteers regarding age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability by 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.
- 12) Review voluntary practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness to take account of changes in the law.

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- 13) Attention is drawn to WSR PLC Grievance and Complaints Procedure (**HR-POL/017**) to be found on the HOPS system under **HR-POL**. The information indicates with whom a volunteer should raise a Grievance or Complaint – normally their line manager.
- 14) It should be noted that the use of the WSR PLC Grievance or Disciplinary procedures does not affect a volunteer`s right to make a claim to a tribunal concerning the alleged discrimination.
- 15) This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The next review date being January 2026.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Version No	Date Approved	Revision
0.1	July 2023	First revision of document.
0.2	January 2024	Approved by board and Published. Next Review date January 2026.

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