

## **IBBERTON, BELCHALWELL & WOOLLAND VILLAGE HALL**

**Reg. Charity No. 1095817**

**[www.ibbertonvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.ibbertonvillagehall.co.uk)**

### **Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent**

The Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Village Hall Committee acknowledges that the United Kingdom is diverse in culture, race beliefs and religion and believes that no individual or group of people should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, age, colour, race, nationality, racial or national origins, cultural heritage, disability, marital status, social background, sexual orientation or geographical location. The committee acknowledges that members of these groups are often under represented, exposed to prejudice and stereotyping, and suffer various disadvantages within our society.

The purpose of this statement is to set out clearly and fully the positive action that Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee intends to take to combat direct and indirect discrimination in employment policy, management of the organisation, relationships with other bodies, and the services it provides to the community, community organisations and individuals.

Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all areas of its work. It aims to overcome discrimination on the grounds mentioned above. The Equal Opportunities Policy will be implemented ensuring equality of provision in representation, service provision, appointment of staff and their conditions of service and access.

#### **The Aims of the Committee**

Our aim is to ensure that we become aware of discrimination and the problem it causes.

Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee will challenge practices, legislation and institutions, which seek to discriminate against or deny the rights of individuals or groups in any form.

Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee will seek to take positive action to address the inequalities in our society.

Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee is committed to the equal opportunities policy set out in this document and will work to develop, improve and monitor it.

## The Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Practice

The Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee acknowledges the definitions of various groups of people who are vulnerable to discrimination as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The committee will support and implement the legislation and will work to ensure that no person protected by the legislation is discriminated against unlawfully, and that any positive obligations and duties are performed.

The committee gives the following specific commitments.

In this section the management committee should set out what they are going to do in order to implement the Statement of Intent. For example:

The Ibberton, Belchalwell and Woolland Committee will:

- where reasonably practical widen accessibility by removing barriers which make it difficult for people with disabilities to use the hall.
- provide facilities for people with disabilities to enable them to participate in activities e.g. the installation of an induction loop. (being explored)
- ensure that the design of publicity and information take account of the needs of people with disabilities e.g. language used, print size.
- deal with any complaints of discrimination promptly, impartially, thoroughly and confidentially.
- ensure all staff, hirers and committee members are aware of the hall's policy on equality.
- ensure that the equal opportunities policy is monitored and reviewed annually.
- challenge racism in any form and encourage its users to do the same.
- challenge sexist policies, practices and attitudes (including policies, practices and attitudes which may relate to sexual orientation and gender re-assignment) and encourage users to do the same.
- challenge age discrimination in policies, procedures and attitudes
- endorse the right of each individual to his or her own religious belief or the absence of a belief.
- encourage people from underrepresented groups to attend and participate in the activities of the hall.

## **The Code of Conduct**

1. People will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of the group to which they belong.
2. People's feelings and views will be valued and respected. Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used or tolerated, e.g. racist jokes or derogatory terminology.
3. No one will be harassed, abused or intimidated on the grounds that they belong to a vulnerable group. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously and the committee will undertake investigations of any complaints quickly, impartially, thoroughly and confidentially.

This document is based on an Equal Opportunity Policy written by

## **Appendix A**

This is a continuation of the prohibited behaviour and key concepts

**Harassment** - disability, gender reassignment, race or sex

There are three types of harassment which is defined as, 'unwanted conduct relating to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

1. **Harassment** - disability, gender reassignment, race or sex. Under the Equality Act 2010 the harassment protection was extended to include disability. There is no specific prohibition on harassment related to religion or belief or sexual orientation but any such harassment that meant people were treated less favourably because of these characteristics would usually count as unlawful direct discrimination.
2. **Sexual Harassment** - unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
3. Treating someone less favourably because they have either submitted to or rejected sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

## **Victimisation**

Victimisation is when a person is treated badly or 'victimised' because they have complained about discrimination or harassment or helped someone else complain. It no longer stipulates that a victim has to compare their treatment with that of a person

who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act. They only need to show that they have been treated badly.

New forms of direct discrimination have been introduced by the Equality Act which will protect more people from discrimination:

Discrimination by association is where a person is treated less favourably than others because they are linked or associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.

Example: Staff at a playgroup refuse to allow a child to attend because the child's parents are a gay couple.

Discrimination by perception is where a person is treated less favourably because people believe that the person has a protected characteristic even though they do not.

Example: A woman is told she is not welcome to join a club because it is believed that she is transsexual. She can make a claim for discrimination because of gender reassignment even though she is not actually undergoing or considering gender reassignment.

Discrimination of association/perception does not apply where the protected characteristic is marriage/civil partnership - in this case the person who is discriminated against must be the one who is married or a civil partner.

### **Dual discrimination**

This was a new provision allowing for claims to be brought on two of the protected characteristics, e.g. sex and race but excluding marriage/civil partnership. The Government announced on the 23 March 2011 that it was not going to implement the provision of Dual discrimination. However, it is still possible for claimants to make two or more separate claims.

### **Public Sector equality duty**

From 5 April 2011 the previous race, disability and gender equality duties, which required public bodies to reduce inequality and foster good relations, have been extended to cover age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, religion/belief, and sexual orientation. It does not apply to marriage/civil partnership.

### **Positive action**

Positive action is needed to promote equal opportunities because discrimination and disadvantage exist. It means that active steps can be taken by an organisation to

compensate for past or present discrimination or disadvantage, by favouring a person with a particular protected characteristic through positive action measures.

Any such measures must be a proportionate way to achieve a particular aim.

Employers, for instance, can favour a person with a protected characteristic when recruiting, providing the person with the protected characteristic is at least as qualified as other applicants. (This should be done with caution because of the risk of a discrimination claim by unsuccessful candidates). Disabled people can be treated more favourably than non-disabled people in order to remove the barriers that they would otherwise face to access services, e.g. building a ramped entrance or a toilet that people with wheelchairs can use.

### **Burden of Proof**

In discrimination, harassment and victimisation cases the claimant must initially, establish facts which point to a breach of the act having occurred. The burden of proof then moves to the respondent to show that he or she did not breach the provisions of the Act. The Act has extended this principle to cover all protected characteristics.

Protections for breastfeeding mothers in goods, services and facilities provisions The Act has clarified that it is unlawful to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding. This means that you should allow a woman to breastfeed her baby if she wishes to do so.