



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY) is a Christian youth charity committed to reflecting the love, justice and compassion of Jesus Christ in all that we do.

We believe that every person is made in the image of God and is therefore worthy of dignity, respect and equal treatment.

SWAY is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, valuing diversity, and fostering inclusion in:

- The delivery of our services
- Recruitment and employment practices
- Volunteer engagement
- Governance and leadership
- Partnerships and supplier relationships

We will not unlawfully discriminate against any individual and will take positive steps to ensure fairness, dignity and respect for all.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is underpinned by:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment legislation and associated regulations

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics:

- 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

SWAY will comply fully with UK employment law and equality legislation in all aspects of its work.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Trustees
- Employees (full-time, part-time, temporary)
- Volunteers
- Session workers and trainees
- Job applicants
- Service users
- Contractors, partners and suppliers

4. OUR COMMITMENTS

SWAY will:

4.1 Promote Equality and Inclusion

- Create an environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Promote dignity and respect in all relationships.
- Recognise and value individual differences and contributions.

4.2 Fair Recruitment and Employment

- Ensure recruitment and promotion decisions are based on merit and objective criteria.
- Provide equal access to training and development.
- Apply fair and transparent disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and service users.

4.3 Safe and Respectful Culture

- Take all complaints of discrimination or harassment seriously.
- Investigate concerns promptly and fairly.
- Protect individuals from victimisation for raising genuine concerns.

4.4 Service Delivery

- Provide services fairly and without unlawful discrimination.
- Use accessible venues where reasonably practicable.
- Communicate in clear and accessible language as far as resources allow.
- Access to our services is not restricted on the basis of religion or belief.

4.5 Modern Slavery and Human Rights

We are committed to opposing modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation in all forms and to upholding human rights in our activities and partnerships.

5. CHRISTIAN ETHOS AND OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

SWAY is established to advance its charitable objects within a Christian framework. Our ethos and values are central to our identity and mission.

5.1 General Expectation

All staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Respect and uphold the Christian ethos of SWAY.
- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with our values.
- Work in a way that supports our charitable objectives.

5.2 Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR)

In limited circumstances, and in accordance with **Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010**, an occupational requirement relating to religion or belief may apply to specific roles.

This will only be applied where:

- Being a practising Christian is a genuine, legitimate and proportionate requirement of the role.
- The requirement is necessary to promote or represent the Christian ethos of the charity.
- The application of the requirement is lawful and justifiable.
- Trustees will document the justification for any role where a Genuine Occupational Requirement applies.

Where applicable, this requirement will be:

- Clearly stated in the job description and recruitment materials.
- Applied proportionately and lawfully.
- Approved by the Trustees.

All other roles will be open to applicants of any faith or none, subject to their willingness to respect and work within the Christian ethos of SWAY.

Nothing in this policy permits unlawful discrimination.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Trustees

- Hold overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with equality legislation.
- Review this policy annually.
- Ensure lawful application of any occupational requirements.

6.2 Manager / Leadership Team

- Implement this policy in day-to-day operations.
- Promote inclusive practices.
- Address concerns promptly.

6.3 Staff and Volunteers

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Avoid discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Report concerns or breaches of this policy.

7. COMPLAINTS AND BREACHES

Any individual who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment or victimisation may raise the matter through:

- The staff grievance procedure
- The volunteer complaints procedure
- The safeguarding process (where applicable)

Deliberate breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, dismissal or removal from role.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

SWAY will:

- Monitor recruitment and employment practices where appropriate and proportionate.
- Trustees will receive periodic reports to ensure oversight of equality compliance.
- Review policies and procedures to ensure continued legal compliance.
- Review this policy annually or sooner if legislation changes.

9. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it reflects:

- Current legislation
- Best practice guidance
- The ongoing mission and values of SWAY

Written: February 2026

Approved: April '26



Review Due: April '27