**Ability Shetland Equal Opportunities Policy**

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| **1. Scope and Purpose**Ability Shetland recognises that in our society certain individuals and groups of people are unfairly discriminated against, both directly and indirectly. They are denied equality of opportunity on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, caring responsibilities, mental or physical health/Disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic/national origin, political or religious beliefs, economic status, criminal record, trade union activity, or a combination of any of these. We strive to eliminate all such forms of discrimination and to create a climate in which equal opportunities are promoted as a means of developing the full potential of everyone who is involved with our organisation. We do this by fulfilling our legal obligations and by taking positive action which goes beyond the requirements of the law, but by avoiding stereotyping and tokenism. **2. General principles** The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of equal opportunities at Ability Shetland. We are always seeking ways in which we can improve our record on equal opportunities.The Ability Shetland Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary Trustees) are expected to facilitate this process.These procedures list the measures that must be taken in order to fulfil the policy. They must be adhered to at all times. If they are breached, the appropriate procedures (e.g. complaints, grievance or disciplinary) may be used to resolve the problem and to make improvements. Anyone who chooses to take such action will not be penalised by the organisation or treated less favourably as a result.2.**Employment practice** Ability Shetland has a public role and we recognise that the services we deliver should ideally be performed by workers who are representative of the diverse community in which we operate. In order to achieve this, Ability Shetland aims to be an equal opportunities employer; optimising on available human resources and ensuring fairness to potential and actual employees.**2.1 Recruitment**Ability Shetland staff are recruited and selected on objective criteria that test the relevant skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and personal qualities necessary for posts. No applicants are placed at a disadvantage by requirements which are not genuine occupational qualifications, as this would constitute indirect discrimination. This does not preclude the setting of certain legitimate limits and exclusions, however. Examples are banning those with a criminal record of abuse from working with vulnerable groups of people, not employing immigrants without work permits, etc. Job vacancies are advertised as widely as possible and make reference to the operation of an equal opportunities policy to which staff are expected to adhere.**2.2 Training**We provide training opportunities to all our staff to meet their training needs. All members of staff receive suitable and relevant equal opportunities training and are provided with a copy of this document**2.3 Other conditions of employment**Ability Shetland is open to flexible working arrangements, such as job sharing, part-timing, flexi-timing, career development initiatives, etc., which enable members of staff to juggle their competing time demands more efficiently. Ability Shetland is sensitive to the time and other constraints under which people operate as a result of their socio-economic situation and cultural background. Meetings and events are arranged as far as practicable in a way that takes into consideration the needs of current and potential staff members (in terms of timing of meetings, childcare arrangements, religious holidays, etc.). All service conditions are reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not discriminate against any particular group and instead provide for the varying needs of the staff team.**3.Volunteers working at Ability Shetland** The positive and open attitude towards recruitment, selection and day-to-day treatment of Ability Shetland staff is also extended to Ability Shetland volunteers and the conditions described above therefore also apply to Trustees and other volunteers. Ability Shetland expects its volunteers to share its commitment to equal opportunities.**3.1 Adapting to volunteers’ needs** We actively look for ways in which we can achieve adequate representation amongst our volunteers, in terms of the community in which we operate. We will only be successful in attracting a wide range of people if we adapt to the needs of individual volunteers. Ability Shetland is able to be much more flexible with volunteers than it can be with paid staff, for example by changing a role description to suit a volunteer’s interests and abilities.4.**The work of the organisation****4.1 Our work with volunteers**Ability Shetland believes that everyone has the right to volunteer and to have equal access to volunteering opportunities, without experiencing discrimination. We also wish the organisations, with which we work, to benefit from a true mix of available volunteers and we therefore closely monitor the potential volunteers who register with us. We reserve the right to recruit volunteers who may benefit from internal mentoring within the organisation.**4.2 Publicity**In order to bring our message to volunteers, organisations and the general public, we publicise Ability Shetland as widely as resources will allow, using as many media as possible. We aim to be inclusive by using positive imagery of, and making reference to, all types of people. The language in our publications is clear and non-discriminatory. We publicise our commitment to equal opportunities whenever appropriate. A copy of this document is available to anyone who requests it.**4.3 Premises, facilities and equipment**Ability Shetland strives to make the physical environment in which we operate as attractive and user-friendly as possible for everyone, Volunteers, staff and visitors alike. This mainly involves the Ability Shetland office, but also premises elsewhere used for any Ability Shetland club, event and meetings. Healthy and safe conditions for everyone are paramount. Special provisions, such as wheelchair access, are made for people with special needs wherever viable.5. **Dealing with harassment** Ability Shetland is committed to social justice and equality and believes that everyone involved with the organisation has the right to freedom from harassment, whether this is on the basis of Disability, race, sex, sexual orientation or any other grounds. Ability Shetland does not condone any harassment whatsoever, whether it is verbal, written, sexual, physical, to person or property, intentional or not. Any such harassment, abuse or victimisation will be dealt with severely and quickly, using the disciplinary procedure in the case of a member of staff and any other appropriate form of action with anyone else.**6.Monitoring and evaluation** **6.1 Success of policy**Ability Shetland monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its equal opportunities policy and procedures on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements. It also studies its other policies and procedures to see that they do not operate against this policy and can be improved in terms of equal opportunities. Ability Shetland is always on the lookout for new ideas to improve the equal opportunities performance of the organisation.**6.2 Feedback**Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to Ability Shetland Team Leader who will ensure that the Trustees consider it. |