

The Royal Forestry Society

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

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Approved by	Board of Trustees
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Person Responsible	Learning and Outreach Manager

The purpose of this Policy is to confirm the commitment of the RFS to tackle discrimination, promote equality and diversity and provide equality of opportunity. It has been developed to take account of all current and relevant legislation; which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010. It sets out our intention to deliver educational opportunities and a range of qualifications that are fair, accessible and do not include any unnecessary barriers to entry.

Statement

The RFS is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst its workforce. Our aim is that each employee feels respected and able to give of their best. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnerships), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or a volunteer, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our commitment

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- Equality in the workplace is good Leadership practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by the RFS Board of Trustees and Leadership Team.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with RFS policy review procedures.

We recognise that everyone has a personal responsibility for the positive application of equal opportunities and the celebration of diversity. The RFS Leadership Team will ensure that a supportive framework is in place to guarantee the implementation of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. The RFS recognises that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved without:

- Developing procedures and practices which actively seek to promote equal opportunities and oppose discrimination;
- Training for staff, Leadership and Trustees;
- Establishing an environment in which people feel free to challenge discrimination.

Conduct and general standards of behaviour

All staff are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. The RFS expects the following from all staff:

- (a) Encourage respect for the individual;
- (b) Encourage collective action to challenge prejudice and the structures that perpetuate it;
- (c) Challenge stereotyped images internally and externally and, in their place, promote positive images;
- (d) Declare as unacceptable any language, action or belief which is prejudiced or which encourages prejudice in others.
- (e) Will not tolerate any form of behaviour, which is derogatory, demeaning or insulting to other persons or groups across the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

Areas covered by the policy

In the provision of services and the employment of staff, RFS is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone. Throughout its activities, RFS will treat all people equally whether they are:

- Seeking or using our services.
- Applying for a job or already employed by us.
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements.
- Volunteers
- Contracted workers
- Staff

This policy applies to all aspects of employment including:

- Job advertisements;
- Recruitment and appointments;
- Training;
- Promotion;

- Conditions of work;
- Pay.

The RFS recognises that everyone has a personal responsibility for the positive application of equal opportunities and that all employees, and managers must ensure that the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy is applied within any area under their control, within the framework in place and ensuring legal requirements.

The RFS will treat all job applicants and employees equally regardless of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Economic status;
- Ethnic or national origins;
- Family responsibility or status;
- Gender;
- Language;
- Marital status;
- Nationality;
- Pregnancy;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Trade Union or political belief.

The RFS will provide equality training and guidance as appropriate to staff; including as part of their induction training as well as further on-going courses as identified via our internal staff performance review arrangements. Discrimination, victimisation or harassment are all considered very serious offences and will be treated as serious misconduct. All employees may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to adhere to the policy. Harassment of employees by third parties will not be tolerated and we will monitor any complaints about this to identify and resolve any problem areas.

Programme and Project Development

The RFS develops and reviews programmes and projects to ensure that there are no features that could disadvantage any groups that share a particular characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the programme or project. The nature of any such features or barriers will be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified in terms of why they are required for the particular programme or project.

Partnership Organisations

The RFS will consider all organisations on the grounds of their ability to contribute towards our strategic objectives and will not discriminate on grounds such as but not limited to size, location and religious connections. All organisations are expected to have an Equality Policy in place.

In the provision of services, the RFS promotes equal opportunities by:

- promoting and widening participation in education and training, particularly by those people previously excluded;
- improving the quality and flexibility of education and training;
- improving access to education and training.

Monitoring the success and relevance of our arrangements

The RFS is committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland Equality Law. The self-evaluation report and action plan is monitored by the RFS Leadership Team and the findings reported to the Board of Trustees. The RFS will monitor the composition of the workforce and selection decisions for recruitment, promotion and training. This information will be analysed on a regular basis to ensure that the company supports equal opportunities for all.

Policy Review arrangements

We will review the policy regularly and revise it as and when necessary in response to feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

Contact us

If you would like to feedback any views please contact us or if you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact us at:

learning@rfs.org.uk