

1. Nature for Everyone

1.1 At Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) we pride ourselves on being a welcoming community that invests in its people and in best employment, volunteering and governance practice. We hold Investors in Volunteers (IiV), Investors in People (IiP) and follow the Charity Governance Code – all of which drive practices which support equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We are values led, with an organisational culture that is welcoming, open and compassionate.

We believe that nature is for everyone: that everyone, regardless of their background, physical or social circumstances, can enjoy & benefit from nature, learn about wildlife & be part of a growing community of wildlife enthusiasts. ‘Everyone Counts’ is a core value of DWT.

This does not mean, however, that we are diverse or truly inclusive. We know that our society is wrestling with entrenched inequalities; sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia continue to blight the lives of many and the gap between the poorest and the wealthiest continues to grow. Lack of racial and economic diversity within the conservation sector as a whole is stark and many communities – particularly those with disabilities or long-term limiting illnesses or who live in areas characterised by economic disadvantage – do not have equal access to nature and the benefits it brings.

1.2 DWT is committed to promoting equality and diversity; to fostering a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences strengthen the organisation, make it a better place to work and to volunteer, and helps us to reach and inspire more people to better fulfil our charitable purpose. DWT aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities through all that we do, and to pro-actively tackle and eliminate discrimination. In our Ten-Year Plan and associated Engagement Strategy we have made a clear commitment to implementing an EDI plan that will help us to reach and involve more diverse audiences through our work and to fully embed EDI across all levels of our own organisation¹. Looking inwards, we aim to be a diverse organisation with an inclusive culture. Looking outwards, we aim to reach and involve diverse audiences and underrepresented groups with our work.

1.3 This Policy and our associated EDI plans are not about being ‘seen’ to act; they are about genuine, meaningful change. We want to put EDI at the heart of how Devon Wildlife Trust works, integral to our strategies and plans, and to all systems change, policy reviews, new project & asset development.

It is a process that will take time, but one to which we and our colleagues across the Wildlife Trusts are genuinely committed. This Policy lays out our core commitments.

¹ ‘Equality, diversity and inclusion are properly embedded at all levels of the organisation’ is a key outcome within our 10 Year Plan, with a priority action to ‘remove barriers to participation, actively seek new and more diverse audiences and challenge any behaviours that are discriminatory’.

Our Policy

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 This policy sets out DWT's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

- We consider that **equality** means creating a fairer society where everyone can fulfil their potential. It is about eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups to employment, volunteering and to the nature based experiences and learning that we provide.
- We consider **diversity** to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this, everyone can feel valued for their contributions. We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.
- **Inclusion** is about actively striving to meet the needs of different people and to create an environment where everyone feels safe, welcome, respected and valued for who they are.

2.2 It lays out how we will meet our responsibilities under the **Equalities Act 2010** and will ensure that DWT can achieve its strategic goals in relation to EDI. It serves as a guide for those who work with and for us. It is applicable to all our activities and associated engagement aims:

- As an employer, how we recruit, support, manage and develop our staff team, as well as expected behaviours at work, including at social gatherings, social interactions or other areas which may impact DWT's reputation (such as personal social media posts).
- As a charity that relies on volunteers and supporters, it informs our approaches to volunteer recruitment and development, expected behaviours of volunteers, how we communicate and how we fundraise.
- As an organisation that works with partners, communities and connects with thousands of individuals every year, it informs approaches to our visitor assets, our education work, our events and other engagement activity.

It applies to staff, volunteers, contractors, supporters. To those who access our visitor assets and to those who benefit from nature based learning and engagement activities provided by the Trust.

The policy impacts and informs all organisational policies and procedures, but is directly supported by the following documents:

- Responding to Bullying and Harassment policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaint's policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary policies

- Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure
- Trustee Code of Conduct

Other policies that directly relate to EDI at the Trust include Period & Menopause and Transgender policies (available upon request).

3. What is Discrimination?

3.1 A general definition of discrimination is the unfair or unjust treatment of people because they possess certain characteristics, such as age, race and religion. Under the Equalities Act 2010 people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the 'protected characteristics' defined by the Act. There is also protection against discrimination where someone is perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or where they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

At DWT we believe everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. DWT will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including intimidation, bullying or harassment) committed against a volunteer, service user, employee, contractor, or job applicant because of a protected characteristic.

3.2 The "protected characteristics" under the Equalities Act are (in alphabetical order):

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

3.3 Under the Act, there are four main types of discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination:** means treating one person worse than another because of a protected characteristic or
 - **Indirect Discrimination:** putting in place a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
 - **Harassment** includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone with a protected characteristic.
 - **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so.
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4. Our Commitment

The organisation commits to:

Planning and Leadership

- embed EDI goals within key strategies and have a clear plan, with measurable goals and appropriate resource, to implement clear EDI objectives. The annual Business Plan and budget will include outputs to specifically progress EDI objectives.
- invest in accreditations that drive best practice such as Investors in Volunteers, Investors in People and/or Inclusive Employers and adhere to the Charity Governance Code.
- appoint Board level EDI champions and a Director who will have clear EDI responsibilities.
- release resources, including staff time from across the organisation, to progress EDI objectives.
- provide opportunities for staff, volunteers and others to contribute towards EDI planning, monitoring and evaluation – ensuring that diverse voices are heard.

Training and Awareness

- train managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
- provide clear guidance for volunteers covering our expectations around EDI.

Staff recruitment and development

- recruit and progress staff on merit, using transparent processes and following best recruitment practice.
- make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff.
- make any other decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

Policies, Processes and guidance

- ensure all key policies and processes support EDI.
- EDI proof all new systems and processes.
- identify and address areas where policy or guidance is needed to address EDI objectives.

Properties and Assets

- have clear accessibility statements for all visitor assets and nature reserves.
- develop access improvement plans for all properties and key assets.
- ensure that key facilities meet the needs of everyone and the commitments of any EDI related policies.

Engagement Activities

- embed EDI principles and approaches within all project plans and new funding applications, bringing in external 'experts' or advisors as needed.
- ensure communications – tools, messages, images – reflect best practice in relation to EDI.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- monitor the diversity of our staff and volunteer teams and the audiences we reach through our work. Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and taking action to address any issues.
- embed EDI monitoring within all project or strategy evaluation.

Raising Concerns

- provide clear routes for staff, volunteers and others to raise concerns about discrimination they have witnessed or experienced, and to take concerns raised seriously through well-defined processes.

Reasonable adjustments

- make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities - removing, reducing or preventing obstacles to employment with the Trust or involvement in our work.

5. Raising Concerns

5.1 For employees or contractors who have experienced discrimination

5.1.1 If you have personally experienced discrimination as defined by this policy, please follow the process used in our [Whistleblowing Policy](#) - outlined below:

If you feel able to discuss it with your manager or supervisor:

- Any concern should be raised first with your line manager or supervisor and as soon as possible.
- S/he will record your concerns in writing and provide you with a copy of these notes.

- S/he will take your concern to the Director responsible for your team who will determine the next course of action
- You will be kept as informed as possible of progress throughout the process and notified of any actions that are taken to address/resolve the issue.

If you don't feel able to discuss it with your manager or supervisor:

- Speak directly to the Director responsible for your team, or, if the issue relates to them directly, with the CEO.

If you are not comfortable with any of the routes above, or if you have any queries about the process, please speak to the HR Manager.

5.1.2 If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation, you can raise this through our [Grievance Process](#).

5.1.3 We hope that you will feel able to voice concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern and/or where confidentiality cannot be maintained for legal reasons.

5.1.4 We aim to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises a genuine concern under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Employees or contractors should not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If anyone believes they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the HR Manager immediately. Any individual who threatens or intimidates employees who have raised concerns in any way will be subject to disciplinary action. See also DWT's [Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy](#).

5.1.5 If any investigation concludes that an individual has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, that individual will be subject to disciplinary action.

5.2 **For employees or contractors who have witnessed discrimination**

If you witness discrimination of any kind, you must report it following DWT's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) as summarised in 5.1 above.

5.3 **For volunteers who have experienced or witnessed discrimination.**

Please follow our [Problem Solving Procedure which forms part of our Volunteering Policy](#).

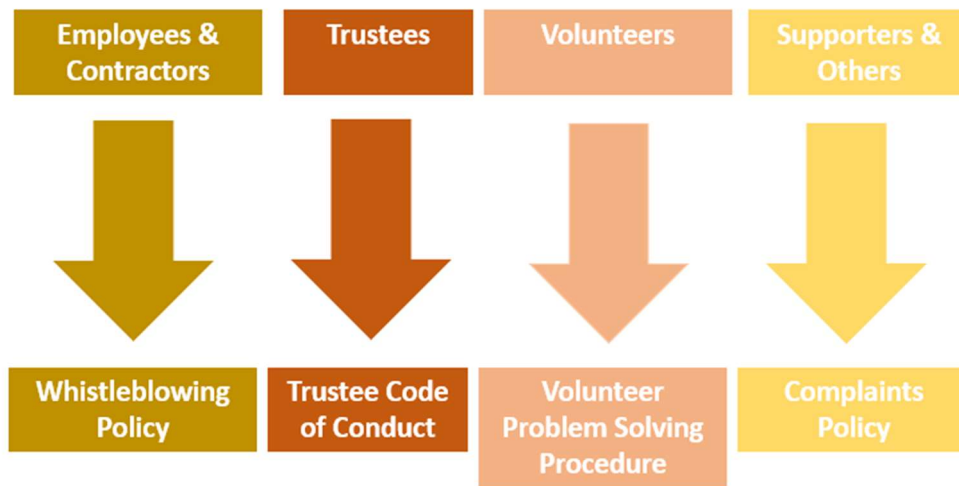
5.4 **For partners, supporters or members of the public who have experienced or witnessed discrimination.**

Please follow our [Complaints Policy](#) which is easily accessible on our website.

5.5 For trustees who have experienced or witnessed discrimination.

Please follow the [Trustees Code of Conduct](#).

Raising Concerns...if you have experienced or witnessed discrimination



If you are unsure of anything related to raising concerns, please talk to the HR Manager.

HR Manager	Wendy Fernandez wfernandez@devonwildlifetrust.org 01392 260 847
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6. Promoting this Policy and our EDI Commitment

We will promote our commitment to EDI via a number of routes:

- Annual reporting – progress against EDI objectives and diversity monitoring will form part of Trust annual reviews and reports to trustees, funders and supporters.
- Our website – our commitment to EDI will be clear and accessible on our website.
- Social media and general communications – imagery, language and stories related to people will reflect and celebrate the diversity of our communities.
- Protests, marches and demonstrations – DWT will not generally attend demonstrations or protests linked to issues not related to wildlife or nature’s recovery or to DWT’s or TWT’s clear policy positions on conservation issues. We will, however, support DWT branded attendance at events which celebrate diversity (such as Pride)

to help diverse members of our DWT community feel valued and included, and to promote the Trust as open and welcoming to others.

- Complaints or negative comments - we have a 'zero tolerance' policy for bigotry. Any criticism or complaints about activities that promote diversity, or which celebrate more marginalised communities, will be dealt with promptly and firmly via clear position statements.

7. Responsibilities

- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that DWT complies with this policy and that EDI is championed within the organisation.
- The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Trust has a robust and up to date policy, that EDI objectives are properly embedded within key strategies, operational plans, process changes and that appropriate resource is allocated.
- The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring that the Trust implements a clear EDI plan, including appropriate monitoring and reporting. Other Directors are responsible for ensuring that this work is supported by their teams as required.
- The HR Manager is responsible for ensuring the Trust has clear, up to date policies/routes for staff to raise concerns about discrimination.
- The Volunteering Officer is responsible for ensuring the Trust has clear, up to date policies/routes for volunteers to raise concerns about discrimination.
- Everyone in the Trust is expected to adhere to this policy and promote EDI in the course of their work or volunteering activities with the Trust.