

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy



Date First Issued:	Issue Version: 2	Planned Review Date:	Policy Owner:
		March 2028	Natalie Bailey
Purpose of Issue/Description of Change:		Approved by: Council	
		Date Approved: 19 March 2026	

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) policy

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Introduction

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) wants everyone in Norfolk to be able to enjoy and experience the county’s wildlife and wild spaces. This goal is a key part of our business strategy and reflected in our new organisational values.

We believe our staff, members, volunteers, trustees, and visitors should reflect the diversity of Norfolk’s communities. To achieve this, we will make Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) part of everything we do by 2027. By building inclusive thinking into our actions and policies, we will continue to grow as an open, diverse organisation where EDI is both practical and essential.

Embracing equality, diversity and inclusion benefits everyone — our people, our organisation, and nature itself:

- **More people will connect with nature.** Everyone, from all backgrounds, will be able to enjoy and support wildlife and help nature recover.

- **Our staff will thrive.** A fair and inclusive workplace helps everyone develop, progress, and feel valued. It also helps us attract and keep talented people, strengthening our team and our impact.
- **Our organisation will perform better.** Diverse and inclusive teams are more creative, innovative and make stronger decisions, leading to better results for the Trust.
- **Our volunteers and supporters will grow and diversify.** By being more inclusive and relevant, we will engage more people from all communities, building a stronger reputation as an open and welcoming organisation.

Scope

This Policy is a public statement of our commitment and approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

- **Equality** is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It's about identifying patterns of experience based on group identity, and challenging processes that limit someone's chance to succeed. Our approach to equality recognises that our social identity, which includes gender, race, disability, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion, will impact on our life experiences.
- We are all different - **diversity** is about recognising the value of difference. It's about understanding each other and truly embracing the diversity of every individual. Diversity is about valuing different identities, knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences, and using these differences to create an effective and innovative workforce and increase our effectiveness as a movement.
- **Inclusion** is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and communities. It's about taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected, able to contribute and achieve their full potential. Inclusion creates a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued. Everyone has a part of play in promoting inclusivity and creating an environment where everyone can flourish.

This document has been developed to ensure we meet the requirements of the relevant Equality Law. The relevant piece of legislation is; The Equalities Act 2010 which covers England Wales and Scotland. The Policy, however, goes much further and contributes to our commitment to EDI with specific focus on:

- Reinforcing NWT's responsibility under both the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, and our role as a conservation leader, service provider, employer and purchaser of goods and services.
- Developing an action plan to help us encourage equality of opportunity across all sections of the workforce.
- Working to improve our services for our stakeholders, without discrimination.

- Promoting EDI across our trustees, staff, volunteers and corporate members
- Working to remove unfair harassment, discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace and between groups.
- Actively fostering good relations in the workplace and between groups
- Educating all trustees and staff at all levels to approach their work with an open mind and to offer support and assistance to others without relying on preconceptions.

Our Approach

Although the Equality Act 2010 details nine protected characteristics, NWT understands that our trustees and employees do not have to disclose that they hold a specific characteristic. We also understand that people who share the same characteristic often have very different experiences and needs, and as such our training also covers asking open questions and offering support if required, without assuming the type of support that may be needed.

NWT will not make assumptions about individual's needs, and we will always seek to support each protected characteristic equally.

We know that we are at the beginning of our EDI journey as an organisation, so will ensure that our actions are always well-informed by our research and the lived experiences of the people we work with. We will encourage constructive criticism, honest consultation and active collaboration with community groups.

We follow the Social Model of Inclusion. The Social Model takes the focus away from the individual and places it onto external factors. This is with the belief that it is social, systemic and physical barriers that cause a person to become disadvantaged. NWT has the opportunity to remove such barriers and promote barrier-free design by automatically making reasonable adjustments, providing training, incorporating aids and adaptations to promote inclusion. Although this model was specifically designed with disability in mind (the social model of disability), the general principals can be employed to prevent the discrimination of those with other protected characteristics.

This policy provides a clear and strong direction so that our trustees, staff, partners, and stakeholders know what to expect from us and recognise the importance of EDI in inform key decision-making at every level within NWT.

Our EDI Commitment

We will make NWT's culture and policy as inclusive as possible. This will give us the foundations needed to develop the accessibility of our offerings and practices, as well as expanding our EDI strategy even further. We will know we have achieved this if:

- Inclusivity is a key consideration and integrated aspect of all our people-related policy and future actions
- We welcome a diversity of skills, backgrounds and people to our working culture and spaces
- Our members, staff, volunteers and partners feel welcomed and supported

- Our leaders and people and culture department are well equipped to foster a culture of inclusion, and are responsible for consistently supporting staff in their inclusive practices and EDI training
- We are fostering inclusive collaboration with other community groups
- We are continually learning from and consulting with others
- We are designating funding to EDI requirements such as staff and volunteer training, accessibility audits, and additional staff capacity
- We are continually developing our training, policy and strategy
- We are ultimately helping to make the conservation sector a better and more inclusive place for all to work.

These ambitions, whilst varied, fall under three commitments:

1. Norfolk Wildlife Trust is an organisation known for **welcoming, connecting, listening and learning**
2. From policy to practice, **inclusion is our everyday**
3. **Everyone** in Norfolk can **enjoy and experience nature**

Objective 1: Our organisation is known for welcoming, connecting, listening and learning

1.1. Training

EDI Training will be completed by all staff and trustees as a standardised induction, and training may develop further depending on the employee's role. We will promote EDI as a group conversation and team effort, not as an individual "tick box" exercise. We will use the existing knowledge within our employee-base to assist in informing and training all individuals. This will be achieved through guided discussions at in-house learning sessions, away days, intranet resources, awareness raising and social offerings.

1.2. Empowerment

The existing EDI working group ensures that every team has a role that includes being an EDI representative. This person is supported to champion EDI considerations in their team and seek feedback from team members on areas related to EDI. We strive to empower staff to develop their EDI-relevant skills, creating an inclusive culture that encourages staff retention. It is important that leaders and managers in the organisation act as positive role models for EDI and recognise their responsibility to support and develop staff on their EDI journey, prioritising our inclusive culture.

1.3. Consultation

Alongside our internal training and discussion, we will ensure that we are consulting relevant communities and organisations when developing new projects or revising our policy. We want to listen *to* people and work *with* them, rather than deciding actions *for* them. We will ensure that any consultants are fairly compensated for their time and expertise.

Objective 2: From policy to practice, inclusion is our everyday

2.1. Policy, Strategy and Templates

We will include EDI as an integrated consideration in our new policies and strategies, and will update all old policies and proposals to include an EDI consideration when they are reviewed. This will include becoming a Disability Confident employer, our funding proposals, our codes of conduct for partners and donors, reserve development, project proposals, communications and interpretation policies and all people policies (staff and volunteer contracts, recruitment practices, reviewing, training etc). When policies come to SLT for approval, the SLT EDI Lead will review the policy with an EDI lens to ensure policies adhere to internal EDI standards.

NWT also has a duty of care for adults and children who visit our sites or attend our events. We endeavour to provide a safe, friendly and inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and all achievements are celebrated. For in-depth information on our commitment to safeguarding refer to our Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedures and Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures.

2.2. Communication

We will make continual efforts to maximise the access and inclusivity of our communications, on and off our sites and across all channels. We will actively seek to represent diverse audiences and voices in our communications. We will embed these commitments in our strategy and brand guidelines and ensure that there is a cohesive and standardised approach to inclusive, representative and accessible communication across every aspect of the Trust. For in-depth information on our commitment to EDI communication refer to our Social Media Policy.

2.3. Monitoring

We will establish an EDI monitoring, feedback and data collection system that is integrated within our existing auditing, appraisal and staff HR Systems. Audit and feedback data will allow us to make informed decisions about key areas for development on our sites and within our working structures. Staff and volunteer surveys will provide anonymous feedback on our demographics and culture of inclusion. This will allow us to assess our progress and compare our work to other trusts, other organisations and the needs of our local population.

Objective 3: Everyone in Norfolk can enjoy and experience nature

3.1 Collaboration

We will go beyond consultation to actively collaborate with other organisations, local groups and other trusts, in order to reach a wider range of people and diversify the inputs into (and outputs from) our projects and communications. This will cement NWT as a valuable community organiser and supporter for all, and leave a lasting legacy.

3.2 Outreach

We will integrate community outreach into our engagement plan, taking nature to people as well as encouraging them to visit reserves. We will tailor our outreach to a wide range of different needs. Our outreach will also grow and change in response to the experiences of our participants.

3.3 Creative Solutions

We will try to find creative solutions for the access barriers that limit engagement with the Trust, including: cost, physical inaccessibility, working schedules, language, perceptions of conservation/the Wildlife Trusts and lack of transport. This will be an ongoing focus of our work over time, and we will regularly review our progress so that we can overcome these barriers to the best of our ability.

Conclusion

Policy Summary

The Policy recognises the constant diversity and changing nature of our sector and our organisation, and as such NWT is committed to continually reviewing and improving existing structures and practices. There is a firm commitment to providing equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination, harassment, hate and disadvantage and to fostering good relations. We are committed to achieving high quality standards of inclusivity wherever possible in our work, including decision-making and employment practice. We recognise that, as a comparatively small organisation, we do not have the capacity or financial power to make these changes overnight; however, EDI will always be a core element of our strategy moving forward.

Transparency

We are committed to remaining transparent in our EDI journey, our values and our ongoing work to make NWT more inclusive and accessible for all.

We will:

- Produce an annual impact review of our progress against the action plan commitments.
- Publish information on the NWT website about our EDI commitments and our ongoing work to make NWT more inclusive and accessible for all.