

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### 1. Statement

The Barrow upon Soar Library is committed to equality and diversity. This commitment extends to our volunteers (including members of the management committee) and we welcome everyone from our community as a volunteer.

The Library encourages all people it works with to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

The way we work and learn within the Library reflects the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

The Library will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

We will not discriminate and will protect people from unfair treatment under the Equality Act 2010 which covers the nine protected characteristics given in the following section.

### 2. Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 covers nine protected characteristics. It aims to protect people from unfair treatment. Everyone has a protected characteristic, so it is important that these are recognised.

<b>Age</b>	Age refers to a person being of a certain age (such as 65 years old) or belonging to a particular age group (such as 40-45 year olds).
<b>Disability</b>	A disabled person refers to a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Gender reassignment is the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	Marriage is defined as a 'union between two partners'. Both heterosexual and same sex couples can get married. Currently, same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'.
<b>Maternity and Pregnancy</b>	Pregnancy is the condition of expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In a non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth. It includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

<b>Race</b>	Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Religion refers to a person's faith. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
<b>Sex</b>	Sex refers to a person's sex – man or woman
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Sexual orientation refers to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

We also recognise that some potential volunteers may have criminal records, and if so, might be reluctant to apply for volunteering roles. Having a criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering with us.

Furthermore, we value difference, and recognise the value that the different backgrounds, skills, outlooks and experiences of our volunteers bring to the Library.

### 3. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- To ensure equal access to volunteer opportunities, and services
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation currently in force
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of, volunteers and service users
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the Library's work
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in the Library
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all the Library premises and services are accessible to all people

#### **4. Responsibility**

The management committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all volunteers also have a duty as part of their involvement with Barrow upon Soar library to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

The committee will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

The Library recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the Library. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

#### **5. Our commitment**

Every volunteer is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

We are committed to taking action where it is needed, to address inequality or promote diversity and creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our volunteers are recognised and valued.

Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and handled via the complaints policy.

#### **6. Policy Enforcement**

This policy is enforced via the Complaints policy.

Any service user who feels s/he has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Barrow upon Soar Library management committee Chair.

#### **7. Monitoring**

Where appropriate, statistics on the Barrow upon Soar Library services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters, including recruitment and selection of volunteers and committee members, to ensure that we do not operate outside this policy. We will review volunteer turnover and seek information on reasons for leaving.

The management committee will review as necessary equality of opportunity relating to the Library services. Recruitment and selection procedures for volunteers (including for members of the management committee) will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not operate against the Equal and Diversity Policy.

If appropriate action will be taken to encourage wider take up of volunteering, and community use of its services.

If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging volunteers or restricting service users, the management committee shall take action to amend the policy.

Approved by Library Management Committee: September 2024  
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