

Equality and Diversity Policy – GENERAL STATEMENT

1. Special Olympics GB is committed to achieving equal opportunities in both employment and the services it provides. No user of Special Olympics GB's services, including employees, volunteers or job applicants, should receive less favourable treatment because of: Gender, colour, ethnic origin, age, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.
 - 1.1 As an employer and provider of services to the community, Special Olympics GB accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs.
 - 1.2 It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, athletes and service users to ensure that no other service user, athlete, volunteer or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated in section 1 (above).
 - 1.3 Special Olympics GB recognises that some service users and athletes may, because of the nature of their disability, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with this Equal Opportunities Policy. Special Olympics GB, its employees and volunteers will do all it can to challenge such behaviour through means of a gentle approach to intervention, aimed at altering attitudes whilst at the same time, maintaining support for the service user and athlete.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1 The Board of Directors of Special Olympics GB shall have overall responsibility for the effective operation and review of this policy. However, all employees, volunteers and athletes have a duty as part of their involvement with Special Olympics GB to do everything they can to ensure this policy works in practice.
- 2.2 Staff of Special Olympics GB (including the Equal Opportunities Officer) shall have overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy, with the Equal Opportunities Officer reporting to the Board on an annual basis.
- 2.3 Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work within Special Olympics GB are also responsible for ensuring that they (volunteers) are aware of Special Olympics GB's Equal Opportunities Policy and that they adhere to this policy whilst working as Special Olympics GB volunteers.

3. Positive Action

3.1 Special Olympics GB believes that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that positive steps shall be taken. Special Olympics GB is committed to:

- i) Recognising and developing potential which has not been utilised before because of past discrimination and disadvantage in society as a whole
- ii) Encouraging access and applications from disadvantaged groups, subject to eligibility
- iii) Providing, when and where possible, training for disadvantaged groups

4. Dealing with complaints

4.1 If any service user, athlete, volunteer or employee feels they have been, or are being, discriminated against in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter in accordance with Special Olympics GB's grievance procedures

4.2 All instances of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

4.3 Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated seriously and may involve invoking Special Olympics GB's disciplinary procedures

5. Recruitment

5.1 All job vacancies will initially be advertised internally to encourage volunteers to apply.

5.2 Special Olympics GB will ensure that all job descriptions, person specifications and applications reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply gender or other stereotyping.

5.3 All advertisements will state that Special Olympics GB is seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer. A copy of the equal opportunities statement will form part of all application packs.

5.4 Where Special Olympics GB proposes to utilise volunteer resources, Special Olympics GB will actively encourage people with learning disabilities to apply, thus offering additional opportunities to people with learning disabilities within the delivery of its services.

5.5 Application forms will make it clear that life experience, as well as formal qualifications and work experience, is valid.

5.6 In the interests of operating an effective equal opportunities policy, Special Olympics GB will monitor certain information about job applicants and volunteers. All such information will be treated in strict confidence and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff and volunteers.

6. Working Conditions

- 6.1 Pregnancy - Special Olympics Great Britain recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their working conditions and will sympathetically consider any requests for such changes.
- 6.2 Antenatal care - Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant employees to attend antenatal classes, medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary. All employees in a qualifying¹ relationship with an expectant mother can take unpaid time off to accompany her to up to 2 ante natal appointments
- 6.3 Flexible Hours - Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees with no qualifying length of service, to facilitate the caring for children and other dependants. Requests for flexible hours/job sharing to meet employees needs for shorter/flexible hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

7. Use of Language

- 7.1 Staff, volunteers, athletes and service users will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles:
- i) Disabled groups and/or individuals with special needs
 - ii) Any race, culture or religion
 - iii) A person's sexual orientation
 - iv) Women and/or men
- 7.2 Where the language used has a personal impact on others and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.
- 7.3 All materials developed by Special Olympics GB will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

¹ Qualifying' means; a pregnant woman's husband, partner or civil partner, i.e. if she's in a same-sex relationship, the father of the child, the parent of the child; and, intended parents in a surrogacy situation who meet specified conditions. In addition, with effect from 5th April 2015 this will also apply to those adopting a child

8. Sexual Harassment

8.1 No member of staff, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

8.2 Sexual Harassment is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, including;

- i) Verbal sexual abuse
- ii) Physical contact
- iii) Repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

8.3 If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user, athlete, volunteer or employee who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

9. Equal Opportunities Officer/Monitoring of Policy.

9.1 The reason for having an Equal Opportunities Officer is to advise, inform and consult with management, staff, volunteers, athletes and service users in order to progress and improve equal opportunities within Special Olympics GB in a positive manner.

9.2 The person appointed to this role should be committed to progressing equal opportunities within Special Olympics GB in a positive manner.

9.3 The Equal Opportunities Officer will:

- i) Work with staff to monitor and report on Special Olympics GB's equal opportunities progress, development and practice and make an annual report to the Board of Special Olympics GB
- ii) Ensure staff, volunteers and service users have an awareness and understanding of equal opportunities issues and practice within Special Olympics GB
- iii) Advise and consult with senior staff of Special Olympics GB and its board on equal opportunities issues and practice to recommend and discuss courses of action
- iv) Know, or have access to, appropriate information, legislation, policy, etc. for the purposes of carrying out their role
- v) Identify and advise on any Special Olympics GB equal opportunities training needs and provision

9.4 i) If the Equal Opportunities Officer is a member of staff, Special Olympics GB will allow adequate time off from his/her normal contracted duties to attend meetings, training events and perform this specific role and this time off will be negotiated with the Equal Opportunities Officer's line manager

- ii) If the Equal Opportunities Officer is a trustee or board member, Special Olympics GB will encourage and pay the necessary expenses for him/her to attend meetings and training courses relevant to the role

9.5 It is not intended that the Equal Opportunities Officer represent particular views, opinions or interests of individuals or groups, nor have the authority within this role to

discipline staff, service users, athletes or volunteers, or raise a grievance on behalf of a particular individual or group.

9.6 The Equal Opportunities Officer will be available in an advisory capacity in the case of a grievance involving equal opportunities issues.

9.7 The current Special Olympics Great Britain Equal Opportunities Officer:

Karen Wallin

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