

**THIS POLICY APPLIES TO GROUNDWORK UK WHICH IS A MEMBER  
OF THE FEDERATION OF GROUNDWORK TRUSTS**



**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

**Approved by Groundwork UK Executive Team March 2010 - Revised October 2010**

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The success of Groundwork depends on our people, our partners and our suppliers. The way we deliver our services is strengthened by capitalising on what is unique about individuals, drawing on their different perspectives and experiences, and by accessing the strengths and expertise of a diverse range of partners and suppliers.

By accessing, recruiting and developing people from the widest possible talent pool and engaging with a wide range of partners and suppliers Groundwork can gain an insight into different communities and generate greater creativity in its approaches.

Groundwork will constantly strive to create productive environments, representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

Groundwork is a group of charities helping people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects, and to live and work in a greener way. We create projects and services that benefit both people and the wider environment. We focus our activity on disadvantaged communities where we can make most difference.

To achieve this, we need to make sure that Groundwork puts equality and diversity practices into effect in both employment and service delivery.

Groundwork's commitment to equality and diversity is more than promoting equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination, bullying and harassment. We are actively committed to implementing the Equality Act 2010 encouraging and promoting the positive contribution of our staff, diverse Federation members, partners and suppliers. We will ensure that this is reflected in our practices, policies and services provided.

This policy describes the role of Groundwork UK in promoting equality and diversity across the Federation. Commitment to this policy is required by all Groundwork UK employees and trustees, sub-contractors, delivery partners, customers and service beneficiaries, referred to collectively as the 'stakeholders'.

### **1.2 AIM**

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination (whether direct, indirect, associative, perceptive or harassment).
- To create positive cultures throughout where equality, diversity and respect is a core value and at the centre of all our activities.
- To ensure Federation members are engaged with development and implementation of policies and procedures.

- To encourage positive action to overcome disadvantage and discrimination and to enable people to achieve their full potential.
- To enable the highest possible standards to be achieved in delivery of our services and employment practices and the promotion of equality and diversity through our work internally and externally

### **1.3 POLICY STATEMENT**

The promotion of diversity and genuine equality of opportunity for all are central to ensuring a fair and just society. Groundwork UK are committed to ensuring all of our employees, trustees and other stakeholders are given equal opportunity to achieve their potential and are valued for the contribution they can make. In pursuing this commitment, Groundwork UK will ensure that:

- in the development and use of employment procedures and practices, Groundwork UK will positively promote equality and diversity so that no person or group of people will suffer discrimination in recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions, access to training or other benefits. Employees will be valued and respected and not be subjected to bullying or harassment in the workplace.
- in the development and delivery of services from or on behalf of Groundwork, Groundwork UK will positively promote equality and diversity so that no person or group of people will suffer discrimination in access to or enjoyment of those services. Groundwork UK will ensure that sub-contractors and delivery partners provide a safe and welcoming environment that offers the support that service users need to succeed and that, where appropriate, they will take positive steps to address gaps in achievement between different groups and will take steps to promote good citizenship throughout our delivery.

Groundwork UK and its suppliers shall continue to actively work towards positively promoting equality and eliminating discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity status, marital or civil partnership status, referred to collectively as the 'protected characteristics'.

Groundwork UK and its suppliers must promote a culture where discriminatory behaviour by its employees, volunteers, trustees and other stakeholders are routinely challenged in a polite and constructive manner so the person making them has a chance to correct their behaviour. If they are unwilling to change their behaviour, then disciplinary action should result and/or their continued engagement with Groundwork UK should be considered as set out in section 8 of this policy. This is to help all the range of diverse communities that we serve view Groundwork as an organisation that is relevant to their needs, which will not act in a way that is discriminatory or offensive, and for whom it is attractive to work, volunteer or partner.

All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated and, if proven, will result in appropriate action for the perpetrator. Any employees or other stakeholders that are found to breach this policy could be subject to disciplinary procedures as set out in their terms of employment, service contract or partnership agreement and/or their continued engagement with Groundwork should be considered. Any Federation Trust members or suppliers that are found to breach this policy could be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined in the Groundwork UK disciplinary procedures for employees and sub-contractors.

## **2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND THE GROUNDWORK BUSINESS**

Working alongside communities, public bodies, private companies and voluntary sector organisations, Groundwork develops and delivers initiatives that cut across economics, social issues and the environment. To create real change that means carrying out work that:

- builds people's skills and improves job prospects
- redesigns our neglected open spaces for twenty-first century use
- helps people make their own decisions about their area
- motivates and develops our young people
- promotes greener ways of living and working.

To achieve our vision of sustainable vibrant, healthy and safe communities, which respect the local and global environment and where individuals and enterprise prosper, Groundwork UK must work inclusively as an employer with passionate individuals, as a prime contractor or service provider with proactive public services and as a supplier or part of the supply chain with innovative parts of the private sector. This policy applies to all these Groundwork UK roles.

### **2.1 GROUNDWORK UK AS EMPLOYER**

Groundwork UK will ensure that it actively promotes equality to job applicants, persons under contract personally to do work, apprentices, employees and ex-employees on the grounds of the protected characteristics, people resident in areas of deprivation and where relevant, other disadvantaged groups not protected in law.

Groundwork UK will ensure that no job applicant, person under contract personally to do work, apprentice, employee, or ex-employee experiences discrimination or harassment due to a relevant past or current protected characteristic, another's perception of their possessing a particular relevant protected characteristic, or due to their association with another person possessing a particular relevant protected characteristic.

Groundwork UK will ensure that an individual will not be victimised if they carry out one of the following protected acts: bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010; giving evidence or information in connection with such proceedings; doing anything which is related to provisions of the Equality Act 2010; making an allegation that someone else has done something in breach of the Equality Act 2010; or having a "relevant pay discussion" with a colleague or former colleague.

Other policies and decisions relating to Groundwork UK terms and conditions of work, pay and benefits, leave and flexible working arrangements, access to facilities, pensions, dress codes, appraisals and performance management, promotion and transfer, handling of grievance and disciplinary, procurement of equipment, IT systems, software, and websites, evacuation procedures, and treatment of employees when their employment ends, are reviewed against this policy in order to ensure a consistent approach to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring anti-discriminatory practice.

Groundwork UK will not lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion.

Groundwork UK may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group which Groundwork UK identifies as being underrepresented in particular types of job.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others, whether or not it is directed at them, to their manager who will take appropriate action and begin relevant investigations as detailed in the Grievance policy.

As an Investors in Diversity accredited employer, Groundwork UK will continue to uphold its Statement of Commitment in relation to Investing in Diversity, which outlines that Groundwork UK is committed to:

- welcoming and valuing diversity amongst our staff, trustees and partners for the range of skills, experience and perspectives it brings
- building our reputation as an ethical and truly inclusive organisation where people want to work
- providing an excellent service to all our stakeholders by working in partnership and understanding their needs
- meeting our organisational goals by encouraging and enabling all to fulfil their potential
- recognising we can always do more to become truly inclusive, and committing to regular self-assessment and improvement.

The diversity of the communities we serve is reflected at all levels within our workforce through:

### **Gender**

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution throughout all levels of the organisation through:

- challenging gender stereotypes
- supporting employees in balancing their life at work and at home.

### **Gender identity**

Employees who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. Groundwork UK will take positive steps to support a transgender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

### **Marital status**

Employees are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status.

### **Race**

The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is represented at all levels of the Federation through:

- challenging racial stereotypes
- understanding, respecting and valuing racial and cultural difference and perspectives
- encouraging and enabling members of minority ethnic groups to volunteer or work for Groundwork at all levels.

## **Disability**

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued at all levels of the organisation through:

- focussing on what employees can do rather than on what they cannot
- challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities and in particular, not making false assumptions that disabled people are unable to do certain things
- making appropriate adjustments in the workplace so that all employees can reach their full potential regardless of any disability.

## **Age**

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- challenging age stereotyping
- recognising that new ideas and fresh approaches can come from anyone irrespective of their age
- recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

## **Religion or belief**

Employees are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their religious beliefs, faith or lack of belief. Employees are also expected to recognise the individual freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution of other individuals and groups.

Note: The expression of beliefs and opinions should not contravene Groundwork's values or its capability to carry out its work.

## **Sexual orientation**

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- respecting the rights of everyone irrespective of whether or not they are open about their sexuality
- respecting different lifestyles even if someone's different lifestyle conflicts with one's own religious or cultural beliefs
- challenging negative stereotypical views
- celebrating and welcoming significant lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) events in the same way that similar events of importance to heterosexual people e.g. marriage, are celebrated.

## **2.2 GROUNDWORK UK AS PRIME CONTRACTOR AND ITS SUPPLY CHAIN**

### **Equality**

Groundwork UK is committed to ensuring that its sub contractors and delivery partners, whether Trusts or other partner organisations, promote equality within their own workforces and deliver services that are accessible and inclusive to people from all backgrounds in particular those within the protected characteristics. Groundwork UK will therefore ensure that its sub contractors and delivery partners:

- provide policies that reflect the same equality and diversity standards as Groundwork UK
- provide evidence of plans for promoting equality
- provide evidence of processes for implementation of such equality plans
- report on levels of access, positive outcomes, progression etc by gender; religion, belief; disability; race; and age

- demonstrate that they provide assessment of need and individually tailored support to enable their beneficiaries and employees to achieve their potential and to access to the full range of services.

## **Diversity**

Groundwork UK is committed to proactively encouraging diversity across all its key activities, including the sourcing and management of supply chains. This means Groundwork UK, via its Supplier Diversity Plan, will actively encourage a diverse range of suppliers to provide us with the goods and services need to run its business. Groundwork UK seeks to provide a level playing field for all potential suppliers irrespective of:

- **Size:** Groundwork UK encourages small and medium enterprise (SME) suppliers
- **Ethnicity:** Groundwork UK encourages suppliers from black and minority ethnic enterprises (BAMEs)
- **Ownership:** Groundwork UK encourages suppliers from public, private and third sector organisations
- **Location:** Groundwork UK encourages all potential suppliers, wherever they are based.

Groundwork UK procurement processes, while proportionate to the value involved, will be transparent, objective and non-discriminatory. In addition Groundwork UK will actively encourage its direct supply chain to use a diverse range of suppliers themselves

All Groundwork UK suppliers are expected to promote diversity across their organisations. This includes their workforce, their clients and their own supply chains. Groundwork UK is proportionate in how we apply this to its supply chain:

- For small enterprises or minor contracts a simple statement of intent will be sufficient.
- For major contracts (over £50,000) Groundwork UK requires suppliers to submit a copy of their diversity plan as part of our assessment of their tenders. Groundwork UK may require specific improvements before awarding contracts, and monitoring work in this area will form part of the overall monitoring of their performance.

Progress will be monitored against key diversity targets set as relevant by Groundwork UK for all major contracts. For example this could include the proportion of our supply chain that comes from the third sector. Groundwork UK will monitor progress against these targets on a quarterly basis, and where major problems are identified, we will produce an action plan and monitor its progress on a monthly basis.

Responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Supplier Diversity Plan sits within the Business Development and Programme Management functions. A particular manager will be identified to take responsibility for each particular supply chain. This may change between the procurement and management stages of the process. Overall responsibility for managing the Supplier Diversity Plan rests with the Director of Development, reporting to the Chief Executive (at least annually).

Responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Supplier Diversity Plan sits within the Development and Membership and Operation Departments. A particular manager will be identified to take responsibility for each particular supply chain. This may change between the procurement and management stages of the process. Overall responsibility for managing the Supplier Diversity Plan rests with the Chief Executive.

### 3. THE ROLE OF GROUNDWORK UK WITHIN THE GROUNDWORK FEDERATION

Groundwork UK manages the agreements, systems and networks that hold the federation together. Its four key functions are:

**Leadership** involves articulating a federal vision that is grounded in equality and inclusivity, for example:

- ensuring that the behaviour and activities of Groundwork UK directors, employees and trustees comply with the Policy.
- keeping open all channels of communication for Directors, staff, suppliers, funders, partners and customers and continuously review and develop our communications practices.
- maintaining our accreditation to the Investors in Diversity standard and develop our competence in this area.
- reporting on the workforce diversity profile to the Board annually.
- maintaining Groundwork's 'positive about disability' status.

**Membership liaison** involves facilitating the development of Federation-wide policies and approaches, for example:

- the promotion of equality and diversity
- continuously developing the equality strategy to help people access Groundwork services
- enshrining a Federation-wide commitment to equal opportunities within the Federation Membership Agreement.

**Brand development** involves sharing good practice across the Federation and promoting it externally, and investigating and dealing with any complaints fairly and efficiently.

**National programme development** involves securing business opportunities on the strength of a reputation for good quality delivery rooted in equality and inclusivity, and providing Groundwork beneficiaries and partners with opportunities to provide feedback.

In essence, Groundwork UK's role is to facilitate and enable Federation members at all levels from trustees to frontline practitioners in the development, assessment and sharing of policies and practices that:

- actively promote equality
- prevent and tackle prejudice-driven bullying
- ensure opportunities and choices are available consistently to all sections of the communities they serve
- ensure the service provision is to all sections of the communities they serve
- ensure service users are not treated differently or unfairly because of assumptions or stereotypes.

### 4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Groundwork UK employees, trustees and other stakeholders.

## 5. THE NATURE OF DISCRIMINATION

This policy refers to several forms of discrimination. These are explained below:

Direct Discrimination results from treating a person less favourably on the grounds of a relevant protected characteristic.

Associative Discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied which is such that it would be to the detriment of a considerably larger proportion of the relevant group with a particular protected characteristic to which the individual belongs, than to others, which is not objectively justifiable and which is to the individual's detriment.

Victimisation occurs if someone is given less favourable treatment than others because they have exercised their rights under the policy, or the relevant legislation, or brought to the attention of others, acts of discrimination (e.g. by making a complaint or providing information on discrimination).

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct related to one of the protected characteristics which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, or is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his or her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him or her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Discrimination arising from a disability is where a person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified.

## 6. TRAINING, COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Groundwork UK will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment, procurement, contract management or other decision-making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

Groundwork UK will provide training to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work at Groundwork UK to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities policy and what they can do to help create an environment free of bullying and harassment for employees, trustees, contractors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Groundwork UK will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

Groundwork UK will publish this policy on its website and on the Federation intranet. It will make the policy available at tender and contracting stage as well as during the induction of new employees and trustees and within the employee handbook. The policy will also be communicated at staff meetings and Staff Representation Committees.

## **7. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every employee, trustee, sub contractor, supplier and beneficiary is required to assist Groundwork UK to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment, service provision and procurement and to avoid unlawful discrimination.

Groundwork UK's Executive Directors will be responsible for ensuring that Heads of Service monitor the implementation of this policy by their staff and sub-contractors.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, trustees, sub contractors, suppliers or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Groundwork UK's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal, termination of contract or withdrawal of services.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Groundwork UK for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit acts of harassment are committing a criminal offence and will be reported to the Police for investigation.

## **8. GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS**

### **Employees**

Employees who consider that that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, bullied or harassed use Groundwork UK's Grievance policy to make a complaint. Groundwork UK will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. Employees will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Use of Groundwork UK's Grievance policy does not affect the right of an employee to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months of the complaint being made.

### **Sub-Contractors and Suppliers**

Sub-contractors or suppliers who consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, bullied or harassed should use Groundwork UK's contract review process to make a complaint or Groundwork UK's complaint procedure.

Use of Groundwork UK's contract review process does not affect any statutory rights.

### **Customers**

Customers who consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, bullied or harassed may use Groundwork UK's Complaints policy to make a complaint. Groundwork UK has a responsibility on behalf of The Federation of Groundwork Trusts to seek to ensure the highest possible standards of service to partners, funders, users and all those with whom Groundwork has dealings in line with the Federation's purpose and core values, limited only by available funding and staffing resources.

Use of Groundwork UK's Complaints policy does not affect any statutory rights.

## **9. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy will be monitored by annual review by our Staff Representative and Consultative Committee, the Executive Team and the Policy & Resources Committee of

the Federation Board to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law, in response to employer, sub-contractor and beneficiary feedback.

Groundwork UK will monitor the ethnicity, gender, age and disability status of the existing workforce, of job applicants (including promotion), and of sub contractors and beneficiaries, and will review its equality and diversity policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, Groundwork UK will implement them.

For contracted provision, Groundwork UK will ensure that data collection methodologies are in place as contractual requirements, enabling equality and diversity data to be monitored on an annual basis

Information provided by job applicants, employees, contractors and customers for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Groundwork UK will also require its sub contractors and suppliers to provide equality and diversity data for annual review.

**Groundwork UK**

Lockside, 5 Scotland Street  
Birmingham, B1 2RR