

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

This policy outlines Whistlewood Common Limited (WCL) approach towards making everyone welcome in our organisation, our processes and our activities.

We believe **Equality** is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and fulfil their potential. This requires access and equal opportunities and is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination.

We believe **Diversity** is about recognising and **valuing differences** in its broadest sense.

We believe **Inclusion** is about creating a culture that recognises, respects, values and incorporates different perspectives for the benefit of the individual and our organisation.

By working (including volunteering) for or with us, you agree to follow this policy.

WCL is built on three core ethical principles: Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share, which are the foundations of permaculture design and the basis of all that we do.

We want everyone to be actively involved with WCL. We want to work for everyone's benefit and help overcome barriers to participation in our communities' future. We are actively interested in:

- Challenging the assumptions and practices of the past.
- Recognising and changing unquestioned historic biases.
- Encouraging people who generally are 'not in the room', who at present feel or are excluded, to come forward and take part in what we do.
- Increasing the diversity of people involved in what we do and hearing unheard and under-represented perspectives.
- Widening access to action.
- Understanding where our actions will be the most beneficial.
- Creating and sustaining an inclusive and just working environment, for us and for the public.
- Making decisions regarding participation purely on merit.

- Equality of opportunity, consideration and treatment; opposing discrimination.

Conspicuous Awareness

Where appropriate and possible we will highlight our position on inclusion, equality and diversity in our activities and communications.

Legally protected characteristics (LPC's)

Discrimination is treating people differently based on an aspect of their being. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination based on certain legally protected characteristics (LPCs):

- Age: Protection against discrimination based on age, both old and young.
- Disability: Protection for individuals with physical or mental impairments that have a substantial ongoing long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Gender reassignment: This refers to the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- Marriage and civil partnership: This applies to individuals who are legally married or in a civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity: this includes the period of being pregnant and any time up to 26 weeks after giving birth.
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin).
- Religion or belief: This includes any religion, religious belief or philosophical belief (or lack of belief)
- Sex: protection against discrimination based on whether someone is male or female.
- Sexual orientation: Protection against discrimination based on whether someone is attracted to the same sex, the opposite sex, or both.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on these characteristics in various settings including access to goods and services, volunteering etc. We note there are some exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Act.

Where a person with an LPC needs us to make an adjustment in our processes or systems to allow them to work, volunteer with us, or be our client, then we will do that provided it is within our reasonable capacity to do.

Further considerations

At WCL, we also note the following:

- Gender.
- Neurodivergence.
- Political affiliation.
- Responsibilities as a care provider
- Socio-economic background.

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be:

- Direct. A disadvantage aimed at specific people and related to a LPC of theirs.
- Indirect. A disadvantage from an action applied to everyone that affects only those people with a specific LPC.
- Associative. A disadvantage applied to a person because of their relationship with another or others with specific LPCs.
- Perceptive. A disadvantage applied to a person in the assumption that they have a specific LPC.

Intent

Discrimination happens regardless of intent. How it is remedied does depend on intent, but it must be remedied fairly.

Vigilance

We commit to actively questioning our actions and statements, and those of others with whom we are engaged in WCL activities, for disrespect and discrimination.

Should we find we have, or be found to have, been disrespectful or discriminatory, we will act to remedy the situation.

Concerns raised in respect of this policy

WCL aims to create an enabling atmosphere in which everyone can courteously and orderly report and see resolved any behaviour that goes against this policy.

We hope that everyone can resolve minor issues amongst themselves, but if they can't or if there is a major issue involved, then the issue should be reported, in confidence, using the WCL Complaints Procedure.

If for any reason that is not possible or appropriate, the issue should be reported to a WCL director. It is then the responsibility of the WCL Board of Directors to resolve and remedy the issue according to the resources and options available to WCL, which may include, but is not limited to:

- Apology.
- Cancellation of affiliation or contract.
- Decision not to work with an individual, supplier, partner, client or other in the future.
- Official complaint.
- Referral to the police or other suitable authority.
- Resignation, dismissal or sanction
- Training.

All concerns of this nature are taken seriously. All disrespect and discrimination are considered misconduct.

Appeals to the WCL Directors following a decision are allowed. Concerns may be considered troublesome if voiced repeatedly and without foundation.

Third parties such as site hirers, clients, suppliers (of non Whistlewood) activities, workshops and neighbours are not bound by this policy, but we are and will act to preserve a safe and respectful environment and will adjust our relationships with them accordingly. Details will be kept confidential as far as is possible.

Contentious circumstances

At times it may be the point of a given activity, for example a public debate, where potentially disrespectful and discriminatory views may be expressed which in normal circumstances would cause us to withdraw from participation. We will, however, tolerate these circumstances if there is sufficient potential benefit to counter the offence or harm being caused.

Hate

We may not immediately realise that an individual, group or cause is associated with discrimination, oppression, hate or criminality. Just because we have previously worked with a person or organisation does not mean we will again, once their activities and viewpoints become understood by us.

We are aware that, for example, hate groups frequently use coded language and images to identify themselves, promote and justify their views, incite violence, or for the purposes of dehumanisation and demonisation, and apologise unreservedly if we miss instances of their use.

Fellow participants

Any person or organisation knowingly and deliberately associating with a hate group will be considered to also hold those views.

Monitoring

This policy is available on our website: www.whistlewoodcommon.org

We will collect such data that supports this policy aim as and when it is appropriate.

We will use this data solely to review our practices and procedures, to ensure fairness, to update and consider any changes in the law.

Approved: WW Board GT,AC,PJ,RD,FG,CG

DATE: 02/09/2025