



Registered charity no. 1193997

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Aims

foodbank.community is committed to promoting equality and diversity (see Appendix 1). The charity ensures, as far as is practical, that all volunteers, prospective volunteers, trustees and other people we interact with (such as supermarket staff and partner volunteers) are treated with respect and dignity, and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination (see Appendix 2).

A key objective of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy is to ensure we provide a working environment in which our volunteers, including trustees, and the other people we interact with feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated fairly and equally, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010) or indeed any other characteristic unrelated to carrying out their role.

The success of foodbank.community depends on the people we work with. We recognise that an effective Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will help everyone to work together effectively as a team, which is clearly in the best interests of both individuals and foodbank.community. We further recognise the benefits of recruiting volunteers from a range of backgrounds, as this creates a workforce where creativity and valuing difference in others thrives. We value the wealth of experience within the community in which we operate and aspire to have a volunteer demographic that reflects this.

Our aim is to provide a volunteering environment that is free from harassment, intimidation or discrimination in any form that may affect the dignity of an individual. We recognise that everyone has a right to their distinctive and diverse identities, and we provide a supportive, open environment where all volunteers are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, in an environment free from harassment and bullying of any description and from any other form of unwanted behaviour.

This policy covers all aspects of volunteering. It is not contractual but sets out the way in which foodbank.community aims to address equality and diversity within the charity. We reserve the right to vary, replace or terminate it at any time.

Relevant legislation

The main legislation that covers equal opportunities and discrimination is the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the following should be considered:

- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013
- any Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission plus any amendments to the above legislation.

Responsibilities

The trustees of foodbank.community are responsible for championing equal opportunities and diversity. We aim to ensure that our recruitment process is free from unlawful discrimination. Adverts for volunteers will normally state:

'foodbank.community is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity'.

Role descriptions are reviewed to ensure both that criteria are not applied that are directly or indirectly discriminatory and that the criteria do not impose any condition or requirement that cannot be justified by the demands of the post. Questions asked of volunteers relate only to information that will help assess their ability to carry out a role.

foodbank.community will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our volunteering environment does not prevent people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified. This may include physical adaptations where possible or more flexible ways of volunteering (where appropriate and practical).

All volunteers should familiarise themselves with this policy and be aware of their own responsibility and role in promoting equality. Volunteers should not discriminate unfairly against or harass other volunteers or those they interact with through their volunteering role, nor encourage others to do so or tolerate such behaviour.

Complaints and grievances

Volunteers who believe they have been discriminated against, harassed or bullied, or who have witnessed such behaviour within foodbank.community, should bring this to the attention of trustees as soon as possible. Please write to us at:

foodbank.community
Hutton & Shenfield Union Church
Roundwood Avenue
Hutton
Brentwood
Essex
CM13 2NA

or email us via:

trustees@foodbank.community

Any queries or comments about this policy should also be addressed to the trustees via trustees@foodbank.community.

Appendices

Appendix 1 | What we mean by equality and diversity

Equality — ensuring people are not treated less favourably or unjustifiably specifically on the basis of one or more protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and other anti-discrimination legislations.

Diversity — recognising and valuing the benefits of different perspectives, backgrounds and experiences, as well as identifying and acknowledging under-representation and taking active steps to address it through initiatives, policies and systemic change.

Appendix 2 | Definitions of unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally, and can take different forms, for example:

- **direct discrimination** — treating an individual with one or more of the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010 less favourably than others.
- **indirect discrimination** — a practice, policy or rule that is applied to everyone and might at first appear fair or neutral but puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- **harassment** — unwanted conduct linked to a protected characteristic which violates an individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- **victimisation** — treating a person less favourably because they have committed a 'protected act', which includes making or supporting an allegation of discrimination, giving evidence relating to an allegation of discrimination, or raising a grievance about equality or discrimination.
- **discrimination by association** — an individual is discriminated against because they associate with someone, for example, a family member, who possesses a protected characteristic.
- **discrimination by perception** — an individual is perceived to have a protected characteristic, irrespective of whether or not this perception is correct.

Date reviewed: March 2023
Next date of Review: March 2024