



FINDHORN NAIRN AND LOSSIE RIVERS TRUST

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Rivers Trust (FNLRT) is committed to advancing equality, creating a diverse organisation and engaging with all communities across our projects.
- 1.2 We aim for FNLRT to be a welcoming, safe and inclusive organisation for all our employees, volunteers and stakeholders, regardless of race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital and civil partner status, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief.
- 1.3 We aim to encourage, value and manage diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed throughout the population. The organisation recognises the moral and social reasons for promoting equality and diversity as well as it being in the best interest of the charity itself, adding value to our work.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 FNLRT recognises that many individuals and communities experience unlawful and unfair discrimination and oppression. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the following “protected characteristics”:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 2.2 Under the Equality Act, FNLRT is not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have any of the protected characteristics. There is also protection against discrimination where someone is perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or where they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- 2.3 **Discrimination** means treating someone worse than another because of a protected characteristic (known as direct discrimination) or putting in place a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified (known as indirect discrimination).
- 2.4 **Harassment** includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone with a protected characteristic.
- 2.5 **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under equality law or supporting somebody who is doing so.

- 2.6 If any employee or volunteer feels that they have been the victim of discrimination, harassment or victimisation during their association with FNLRT they should refer to and follow the guidelines outlined in FNLRT-02-05 Bullying and Harassment Policy.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1 FNLRT believe that equality for all is a basic human right and actively opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. FNLRT celebrates the diversity of society and is striving to promote and reflect that diversity within the organisation.
- 3.2 The policy applies to job applicants (both internal and external) and all employees and workers whether full time, part time, temporary, sessional, seasonal, voluntary or contract, and Board members.
- 3.3 It is each employee's obligation to be sensitive about the impact that they have on others and behave in a way that supports this policy when dealing with everyone that they come into contact with as part of their employment. This policy is not designed to discourage normal social relations among colleagues or with the public. This policy applies not only at the organisations' premises but anywhere you are working as part of your employment, and includes any social occasions organised by the organisation.

4. Our Commitments

- 4.1 Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- 4.2 Preventing any form of direct or indirect discrimination in our employment practice, in the governance of our organisation and the delivery of our services.
- 4.3 Taking positive action, in accordance with section 158 of the Equality Act 2010, to address any social or economic disadvantage, or the effects of past or present discrimination or disadvantage that may be faced by groups of women who share another protected characteristic.
- 4.4 Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff, service users and trustees are recognised and valued.
- 4.5 Reflecting and respecting diversity in all aspects of our service provision.
- 4.6 Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognised and valued. This commitment includes training employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All employees should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, suppliers and the public
- 4.7 Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures or in line with the FNLRT Bullying and Harassment Policy, and appropriate action will be taken.

Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- 4.8 Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 4.9 Make decisions concerning employees based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 4.10 Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- 4.11 Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

5. Equal Opportunities in Employment

- 5.1 FNLRT wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment from the recruitment process to an employee exiting the organisation. All job applicants and employees will be afforded equality of opportunity regardless of their sex, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, race, age, nationality, national origins, ethnic origin, disability, or responsibility for dependents.
- 5.2 Our long-term aim is that the composition of our workforce and Board should reflect that of our local community. We recognise the value of a diverse workforce in which individuals from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities, can bring new ideas to enable us to achieve our charitable aims.
- 5.3 We are committed to providing equality of access and provision in all our activities. FNLRT will treat all users of our service with dignity and respect and will work to ensure that they are provided without discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 Each employee, volunteer, consultant, trainer, facilitator or Board member is responsible for their own compliance with this policy.
- 6.2 Every manager and employee has personal responsibility for implementation of this policy although the FNLRT Director is responsible overall for the policy's day-to-day implementation.
- 6.3 Employees must not instruct or aid someone to carry out an act of discrimination, harassment or victimisation or condone discrimination, harassment or victimisation by others.
- 6.4 All employees have a responsibility to:
 - comply with this policy and ensure its consistent application on a day to day basis

- attend and participate in training on equalities and diversity
 - bring any discriminatory behaviour to the attention of their line manager
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the FNLRT Board to monitor effectiveness, and to review and develop the policy where necessary. Monitoring and review will take place annually. Consultation will take place with employees on the implementation and development of this policy. Any doubts about the policy should be addressed to the FNLRT Board.
- 6.6 FNLRT will keep under review all of its procedures and practices to ensure that no individual or group is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly in any of its activities. FNLRT is committed to making this policy effective and will regularly review and monitor the results of this commitment which will be demonstrated through the FNLRT Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
- 6.7 FNLRT will ensure that all relevant policies including dignity at work, recruitment, employment and personnel policies are consistent with this Equalities and Diversity Policy
- 6.8 The FNLRT Board will develop and implement and regularly review an annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan (Annex 1)

7. Action Plan

- 7.1 FNLRT is committed to developing a programme of action to promote diversity and equality, through the Equality and Diversity Action Plan (Annex 1) and will seek to monitor and review achievements in this area and to make this information freely available.

8. Raising a Complaint

- 8.1 Employees who feel they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with the FNLRT Director. Initially the employee and Director should aim to resolve the matter informally. It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and easily resolved once the problem is clear.
- 8.2 If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, or the complaint is very serious, or the Director is the cause of the complaint, the employee should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal grievance under the FNLRT Grievance Procedure.
- 8.3 Breaches of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees (up to and including dismissal), appropriate action against a member of the relevant Board, termination of contracts for services of consultants or trainers, or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.
- 8.4 Complaints in relation to service delivery should be raised under our complaints policy

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 FNLRT recognises that genuine equality of opportunity can only be assessed by monitoring what is actually happening and then using this information to modify and improve our future action plans, policies and procedures.
- 9.2 FNLRT will review this policy every three years and when there are relevant changes in legislation or circumstance.

ANNEX 1 Equality and Diversity Action Plan

Policy & Planning	Action Required
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in place	Draft Policy to Board by Aug 24
Circulate to all employees and board members and ensure that the policy is fully understood by all	Administrator by Sept 2024
Publish on website	Administrator by Sept 2024
Ensure the policy is complied with at a practical level in areas of service delivery, training and development and general management	FNLRT Director - Ongoing
Recruitment & Selection	
Publicise vacancies widely	Administrator- ongoing
Ensure all advertisements encourage a diverse range of applications	Administrator- ongoing
Ensure advertisements do not gear the vacancy to a certain age, sex, or ethnicity.	Administrator- ongoing
Ensure clear job descriptions and person specs are prepared for all posts.	Administrator- ongoing
Ensure the shortlisting and interview procedures focus on the person spec.	FNLRT Director- ongoing
Monitor and record each stage of the recruitment process.	Administrator- ongoing
ensure the policy is complied with at a practical level in recruitment and selection,	FNLRT Director - Ongoing
Retaining & Developing staff	
Ensure staff and board members have access to equality and Diversity training	Administrator- ongoing
Ensure development opportunities are planned round the individual and their work priorities	FNLRT Director- ongoing
Ensure there are clear procedures for supervision and appraisal.	FNLRT Director, ongoing
Ensure that employees are confident that their needs are supported and there is a robust Grievance Policy in place so they have confidence to report incidents of discrimination and harassment	FNLRT Director - ongoing
Board Members and volunteers	
Ensure all board members and volunteers are aware of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	FNLRT Director, ongoing
Ensure Board members review the policy annually	Administrator – Aug 2025
Extend training opportunities to volunteers when appropriate	FNLRT Director – ongoing
Board members will pro-actively encourage individuals from underrepresented groups to stand for election to the Board	FNLRT Board - ongoing
Activities and Outreach	
Ensure events are widely advertised with the aim of reaching as wide an audience as possible	FNLRT Director – ongoing

Foster educational outreach with local schools, including in population centres which facilitates the Trust to reach children from multiple different backgrounds	FNLRT Director – ongoing
Ensure activities hosted by FNLRT are widely advertised and organised in a way that is inclusive and as accessible as possible	FNLRT Director – ongoing
Engage with other local charities representing marginalised groups and communities to encourage involvement with FNLRT activities	FNLRT Director – ongoing