



Equal Opportunities Policy

Wiltshire Adopters - Networking, Development & Support (W.A.N.D.S) is a charitable organisation run by a board of Trustees.

The Trustees are:

Sara Taylor (founding member)
Marie Gondlach (founding member)
Lisa Bradley (11 July 2019)
Sophie Graham (2 March 2020)
Jon Allnutt (15 July 2021)
Simon Elliott-Wiley (15 July 2021)

The registered office of the Trust will be situated in Wiltshire, England.

We are committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination. This policy applies to every Trustee, Volunteer, Member or Visitor.

A copy of this policy will be available to all Trustees, Volunteers, Members, Visitors or anyone working paid or unpaid on behalf of W.A.N.D.S. It will also be available on our website and made available via a notice at all meetings.

Any questions about this policy should be directed to the board of Trustees.

The policy is annually reviewed and maybe amended at any time.

Wiltshire Adopters, Networking, Development and Support (W.A.N.D.S) is fully committed to providing equality and all opportunities will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race including colour, ethnic or National origins and Nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation ('the protected characteristics'). W.A.N.D.S is open to all Adopters, whose application to become adopter(s) has been approved by an adoption agency.

W.A.N.D.S aim to create an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

W.A.N.D.S will not unlawfully discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment of Trustees, Members and Volunteers and the selection of Visitors. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively.

W.A.N.D.S aim, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that all our working practices are applied fairly and consistently and, where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to avoid or overcome any disadvantages these may cause and to promote equality.

W.A.N.D.S aim to organise a range of events and activities to suit the needs and interests of a wide variety of Adopters and those whose application to become adopter(s) has been approved by an adoption agency. We should be open to new ideas and particularly prioritise opportunities for members, visitors and volunteers to share their cultural heritage with one another.

W.A.N.D.S Trustees have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation and for observing relevant codes of practice.

The board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and for ensuring that all policies, procedures and practices adhere to this policy.

All people using W.A.N.D.S have a responsibility not to discriminate or harass others within our organisation and to report any such behaviour of which they become aware to a Trustee.

The board of Trustees will investigate every complaint, listening to all parties involved (if the complaint is against a Trustee, said Trustee will not be part of or conducting the investigation).

Any complaint against W.A.N.D.S, as a whole, will be investigated by the Trustees to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future. At the conclusion of the investigation, learning outcomes and proposed remedial actions will be shared with all concerned to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future.

Forms of discrimination that W.A.N.D.S aim to avoid –

- **Direct Discrimination** – this occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. Direct discrimination can also occur by way of association, which is when a person is treated less favourably because, for example, their spouse or partner or other relative has the protected characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination** – this occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in this way has a right to complain. To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate business reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.
- **Victimisation** – this occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because they have raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action, in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination, against W.A.N.D.S or because they have supported someone else in doing this.
- **Harassment** – is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable. Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period of time and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they

nonetheless find unpleasant. Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to protected characteristics it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.

- **Discrimination arising from Disability** – in addition to the above it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified. Furthermore, W.A.N.D.S has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled members, volunteers, visitors and those people working on our behalf both paid and unpaid are not substantially disadvantaged.

At W.A.N.D.S we are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on **15th July 2021**

A signed copy is kept on file for anyone to view when requested.