

Soar Sound Equality and Diversity Policy

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1 Document Information

Policy: Soar Sound Equality and Diversity Policy

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Implementation Date: 9th March 2024

Planned Review Date: 5th March 2025

Author: Rob Watson (Organisation Development Director of Soar Sound)

Soar Sound's Safeguarding Officer:

Policy Validity Statement: Policy users should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the documentation. This document will be reviewed one year from its issue date.

Approval: The policy will remain valid, including during its period of review. However, the policy must be reviewed next year and afterwards at least once in every three-year period.

2 Introduction

This policy sets out how Soar Sound will fulfil its statutory duties and responsibilities effectively, both within its own organisation, and for the affiliated groups and members that help with Soar Sound's not-for-profit vision and public purpose objectives.

2.1 Vision

Soar Sound seeks to provide broadcast radio and other online and legacy media services that are not for private gain, with any surplus or assets used principally for the benefit of the community.

2.2 Objects

The objects of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to carry out radio broadcast and media production services that will benefit communities resident in Leicester and Leicestershire, and in particular, and without limitation, with a focus on public education, wellbeing, mental health, economic development and employment.

Soar Sound supports all services, projects and activities that meet our not-for-profit objectives, as above, through offering publicity in our Soar Sound radio service and other media services.

3 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all staff volunteers and anyone who comes into contact with the Soar Sound are not discriminated against according to their age, marital status, pregnancy status, disability, race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This policy aims to comply with anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Soar Sound recognises the equal value of all before the law and seeks to provide equal opportunities in all areas of our work.

3.1 Definitions

Equal Opportunities ensures that policies, procedures and practice within Soar Sound do not discriminate against its employees, volunteers and stakeholders. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of whom they are, their background or the expression of their beliefs, in accordance with the law.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and can maximise their potential and contribution to the Soar Sound and to the community. We recognise that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and different approaches, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient, and more innovative.

- Direct discrimination, as defined in law, occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably than other people on the grounds of age, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, pregnancy status, gender reassignment status, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- However, in terms of this policy, the definition is taken to be wider and includes, for example, colour, nationality, caring responsibility, mental health, social class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, and trade union activities.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice puts people of a particular group at a disadvantage, which is not justified in relation to the job. For example, a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified.
- Victimisation means that if a person has made, or is making, an accusation of discrimination in good faith, it is unlawful to discriminate against them for having done so, or because they intend to do so, or it is suspected that they intend to do so. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

- Harassment means unwanted conduct based on race, sex or age etc., which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities, or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual.
- Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees, or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures could take the form of additional training or providing the job application form in other languages to encourage applicants from these communities.
- 'Positive discrimination' at the point of selection for work is not permissible.

4 Equality Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services.
- To ensure equal access to volunteer opportunities.
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Rights Act 1996, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Employment Act 2002, Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Religion or Belief Regulations 2003, Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003 and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation.
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination.
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers and service users.
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the Soar Sound's work.
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in Soar Sound.
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as it is practicable, that all the Soar Sound services are accessible to all people.
- To ensure that advancement within the Soar Sound is determined by objective criteria and personal merit.

5 Policy Implementation

The Soar Sound strives to ensure that our directors and volunteers reflect the wider community. Appropriate information will be provided to enable directors and volunteer members to perform their jobs effectively.

5.1 Grievances

- Any staff member, director or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Soar Sound's established Complaints Procedure.
- Any service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Soar Sound's nominated director, who must report any such complaint to the Soar Sound committee. If the complaint is about the nominated person, this should be made through another director.
- Any job applicant who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the nominated director, or the Chair of the Soar Sound.
- Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with Soar Sound's Harassment Procedure.
- Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under Soar Sound's Disciplinary Procedure.
- The Soar Sound will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination.
- Any member of any Committee or working group of the Soar Sound found in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave the Soar Sound.
- Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from the Soar Sound.
- Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the Soar Sound will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.

- If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of directors, staff or volunteers or restricting service users, the nominated director should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.

6 Monitoring and Review

Soar Sound will monitor and evaluate the information that is appropriately collected in relation to the equality duties, and will make periodic reports to the Director Board, making recommendations for improvements and changes to the Soar Sound's activities and communications.

Signed: Rob Watson

Position: Organisation Development Director

Date: 9th March 2024

Review Date: 5th March 2025

Soar Sound