

# The Girls' Brigade in Scotland – Equal Opportunities Policy

## Policy statement

The Girls' Brigade in Scotland ("GBS") is committed to promoting opportunities in employment and volunteering. All workers, members, and volunteers will receive equal treatment regardless of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, pregnancy, trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. Our members, volunteers, workers and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes.

GBS shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice. They will seek to follow Codes of Practice issued by appropriate bodies.

This policy, and the measures we take to implement it, have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant governmental and professional bodies. We are committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all workers, members and volunteers. The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce, members and volunteers. The following paragraphs deal with the specific categories of workers and areas of work which we have identified as potentially giving rise to equal opportunities issues and provides more specific guidance on the parameters of our policy and approach to equal opportunities.

This policy is for guidance only and shall be provided or be available to all workers, members and volunteers, but does not form part of any contract of employment and may be amended at the discretion of GBS.

### 1. TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY?

1.1 This policy applies to GBS's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not our employees, but who work at The Girls' Brigade in Scotland ("GBS") (collectively **workers**), as well as to those volunteering with us or who are members of the organisation.

1.2 All workers and volunteers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues and fellow volunteers with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass anyone within the organisation.

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- 1.3 The policy statement in paragraph 1.2 applies equally to the treatment of our visitors, clients customers and suppliers by our workers and volunteers, and the treatment of our workers and volunteers by these third parties.

## **2. PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

- 2.1 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the effective operation of GBS's equal opportunities policy (**EOP**) and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Chief Executive has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to (*insert the name of Captain, Commissioner, etc.*) Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the aims and objectives of GBS with regard to equal opportunities. To facilitate this process, managers will be given training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice
- 2.2 All members of staff are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Chief Executive to request training or an information pack

## **3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF POLICY**

- 3.1 GBS will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy, part-time or fixed-term status ("protected characteristics"). This policy applies to all aspects of the working relationship with workers and to the relationship between all workers, and to all aspects of volunteer recruitment and management.
- 3.2 This includes the advertising of jobs and volunteering opportunities and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy, or of the volunteering relationship.
- 3.3 GBS will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of workers' or volunteers' religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

## 4. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

- 4.1 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, at GBS outside GBS (when dealing with GBS contacts or when wearing a GBS uniform), and on GBS-related trips or events including social events.
- 4.2 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
- a) Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out in paragraph 3.1. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination.
  - b) Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of their protected characteristics. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If this criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be unlawfully indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.
  - c) Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
  - d) Victimisation, which is retaliation against someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.
  - e) Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

## 5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 5.1 Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person and with the involvement of the HR Department, where possible. Our recruitment procedures be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- 5.2 Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular

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groups from applying.

- 5.3 Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- 5.4 Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of the board of trustees. For example:
  - a) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
  - b) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
  - c) Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- 5.5 Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.
- 5.6 We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from UK Visas and Immigration.

## **6. STAFF TRAINING AND PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

- 6.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All workers will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.
- 6.2 Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.
- 6.3 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all workers who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

## **7. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

- 7.1 We will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and

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objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees.

- 7.2 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and without discrimination, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **8. DISABILITIES**

- 8.1 If you are disabled, or become disabled, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible.
- 8.2 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact the Chief Executive to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Chief Executive may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 8.3 GBS will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, GBS will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **9. PART-TIME AND FIXED TERM WORK**

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

We will also ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately and lawfully.

## **10. BREACHES OF THE POLICY**

- 10.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy which will be dealt with (for workers) in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure and (for volunteers) in accordance with our Managing Volunteers Policy. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
- 10.2 If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure (for workers) or through our Policy for Resolving Volunteer Problems and Concerns (for volunteers) as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
- 10.3 There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff or volunteers who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure or Managing

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Volunteers Policy as appropriate.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVISION OF POLICY**

- 11.1 This policy is reviewed regularly by the Executive in consultation with the Chief Executive. Recommendations for any amendments are reported to the Executive Committee.

Policy last updated March 2022.

- 11.2 We will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the EOP statement by monitoring the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of its workers.
- 11.3 GBS is committed to providing relevant training for all staff and volunteers on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.