

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Policy Owner:

Compliance Manager

Approved By:

HR Committee Name

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2 INTRODUCTION

Suffolk Libraries aim to ensure equality and inclusion are at the heart of all we do. We try to create safe, welcoming spaces for everyone in our communities regardless of age, gender, race, socio-economic background or beliefs. Libraries can play a part in fostering strong and cohesive communities by promoting understanding, trust and respect. Libraries facilitate this through running events and activities, providing relevant content and information and giving different people the chance to meet and come together.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to the services and facilities provided by Suffolk Libraries, library users, members of the public and contractors. Staff are covered by the Equal Opportunities Policy.

4 THE POLICY

Suffolk Libraries is fully committed to the letter and the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Suffolk County Council has requested that consideration be given to the needs of those living in isolated rural communities in addition to the protected characteristics listed above.

Suffolk Libraries aims to treat all its customers fairly, with dignity and respect as it expects them to treat other users and staff.

To achieve this Suffolk Libraries will:

- Train Staff in Equalities and Diversity
- Monitor its buildings to ensure they are fully accessible and provide assistive equipment as appropriate, such as automatic doors, hearing loops and evac chairs; ensure interiors are designed to help those with dementia and visual impairment with space for wheelchairs to manoeuvre; a selection of chairs suitable for different conditions are provided; appropriate light levels
- Provide stock in a variety of formats either printed or digitally
- Provide stock appropriate to reading levels and ages
- Provide materials in languages spoken in the communities

Suffolk Libraries also aims to reflect the diversity and views of the communities it serves.

- Through relevant activities and events, exhibitions and displays
- Purchasing stock to reflect the diversity of our communities
- Providing relevant information
- By recruiting staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve

Suffolk Libraries wants to draw on and reflect the full range of backgrounds and perspectives in our communities as libraries are places to share views and ideas. However, those views can at times be uncomfortable and even offensive, but it has to remain impartial and provide alternative views when appropriate. Suffolk Libraries will not tolerate any form of hate speech in its libraries and will take appropriate action against those who behave in that way.

Suffolk Libraries will undertake equality impact assessments for new services as and when appropriate. It will also periodically review existing services to ensure they are still operating fairly for everyone.

Any complaints of discrimination or unfair treatment must be taken seriously and reported to the Compliance Manager (who functions as the Suffolk Libraries Equalities Officer) who will organise a full investigation by senior management and ensure appropriate action is taken.