



BLACK ISLE MEN'S SHED EQUALITY POLICY

Policy Statement:

The Black Isle Men's Shed (BIMS) endorses the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in Shed, whether as casual participants, members, Supervisors or office-bearers in the shed:

- has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, religion, race, ethnic origin, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation; and
- can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to enjoy their pastime without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal obligations:

BIMS is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to harassment.

Positive action:

The principle of Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails taking positive steps to counteract the effects of physical or cultural barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity for all sections of the community to participate equally and fully.

BIMS will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable participation in associated shed activities by people from any group that is under-represented or has difficulty accessing it.

Implementation:

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy:-

- A copy of this document will be published on the BIMS Website.
- The Health and Safety Officer will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is observed.
- The Board and Committee will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the BIMS.
- BIMS will collaborate fully (while observing Data Privacy) with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance equality.

Complaints and compliance:

BIMS regards all forms of discriminatory behaviour as unacceptable and is concerned to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

BIMS supports the Scottish Men's Shed Charter which promotes rule observance and good communication between organisers and members.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any member who violates the BIMS Equality Policy.

Any person who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by an individual member of the BIMS, should first complain to that person. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against the BIMS itself, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Chairman. Contact details are available through the website.

The Chairman will investigate the complaint personally or appoint a Board member to do so. The investigation will be conducted impartially, confidentially, and without avoidable delay. Any person against whom a complaint has been made will be informed of what is alleged and given the opportunity to present their side of the matter.

The outcome of the investigation will be notified to the parties in writing and reported to the BIMS Board. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of an individual member, the Board may impose sanctions on that person or organization in line with the BIMS Constitution. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from BIMS membership. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Board will consider the severity of the matter and take account of any mitigating circumstances.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amounts to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed.

In the event that an individual or organisation associated with the BIMS is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the BIMS Board will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action as above in relation to the matter concerned.

Stewart Robertson

Chairman

Date:

APPENDIX

Relevant legislation and forms of unacceptable discrimination

Legal rights:

Discrimination has been legally defined through a series of legislative acts, including the Race Relations Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act 2006.

In April 2010, the Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent. The Equality Act 2010 is a new law which harmonises where possible, and in some cases extends, protection from discrimination. It applies throughout the UK and came into force in October 2010.

Discrimination refers to unfavourable treatment on the basis of particular characteristics, which are known as the 'protected characteristics'. Under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic¹. This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or with someone who is assumed to have it.

Forms of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour include the following:

Direct discrimination:

Direct discrimination can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination:

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to an individual or group that would put persons of a particular characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons.

Discrimination arising from disability:

When a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified, this is unlawful. This type of discrimination only relates to disability.

Harassment:

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or which creates an intimidating or hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

¹ The exception to this is pregnancy and maternity, which does not include protection by association or assumption – a woman is only protected from discrimination on grounds of her own pregnancy.

Victimisation:

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because he or she has made allegations or brought proceedings under the anti-discrimination legislation, or because they have helped another person to do so. To do so would constitute victimisation.

Bullying:

Bullying is defined as a form of personal harassment involving the misuse of power, influence or position to persistently criticise, humiliate or undermine an individual.