



## Equal Opportunities Policy

Last Updated: 18 Mar 2024

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### Policy Scope

FEAST With US (hereby known as FEAST) is committed to providing FEAST services and programmes without unlawful or unfair discrimination of service users, staff, partners, volunteers, suppliers, or members of the public.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide equality, fairness, dignity and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time, or full-time, in either paid or voluntary positions
  - Not unlawfully discriminate because of protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as defined by the Equality Act 2010
  - Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities.
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### Definitions

Discrimination by or against a worker is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exception. Discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally, and can take different forms, for example:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating an individual with one or more of the protected characteristics less favourably than others

- **Indirect discrimination:** unjustified provisions, criterion or practice e.g. our policies, procedures or practices, which are applied to everyone, or groups of people, but have, or will have, the effect of putting those who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared to others
- **Harassment:** unwanted conduct linked to a protected characteristic which violates an individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them
- **Victimisation:** treating a person less favourably because they have committed a "protected act". "Protected acts" include making or supporting an allegation of discrimination, or giving evidence relating to an allegation of discrimination, or raising a grievance about equality or discrimination.
- **Discrimination by association:** an individual is discriminated against because they associate with someone, e.g. a family member, who possesses a protected characteristic
- **Discrimination by perception:** an individual is perceived as having a protected characteristic, irrespective of whether or not this perception is correct.

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## FEAST Responsibilities

### **FEAST Commitments:**

- Encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff and volunteers are recognised and valued
- Training of all employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination
- Make staff aware they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, service users, partners, volunteers, suppliers and the public
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, service users, partners, volunteers, suppliers and the public and any others during the FEAST's work activities

- Make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
  - Decisions of promotion and development concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
  - Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and equal opportunities, update policies and procedures to ensure FEAST meets its legal requirements relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion
  - Ensure that staff, trustee and volunteer roles are advertised to reach a wide audience, to ensure that a diverse range of candidates are informed of opportunities and able to apply
  - Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding protected characteristics in encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy.
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### Procedure

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees, CEO, and Operations Manager.

In the instance of a grievance, FEAST staff or volunteers should raise issues with the Operations Manager, or in cases where the Operations Manager is concerned, with the Chair or Board of Trustees, where appropriate.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

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### Application of Policy

This policy applies to all conduct at any FEAST venue/event/meeting either online or in person and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on FEAST's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to FEAST).

### **Specific Areas of Application:**

#### *Recruitment*

Selection for employment at FEAST will be on the basis of merit, experience, skills and temperament, and considered as objectively as possible.

#### *Training*

You may be required to participate in training activities to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.

#### *Promotion*

All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit, experience, skills and temperament and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed in this policy. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.

#### *During employment*

The benefits, terms and conditions of employment for FEAST staff and volunteers will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

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### **Contacting Us**

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact us at [info@feastwithus.org.uk](mailto:info@feastwithus.org.uk).

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Reviewed and approved on 8 March 2024 by Caroline Monkhouse Flower, CEO, and Helen Burgess, Chair of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the board.

Signed by:



Helen Burgess

Chair of the Board of Trustees

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FEAST With Us, Registered Charity in England and Wales

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