



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Workers' Educational Association is a democratic membership organisation with charitable status that provides adults with educational opportunities to develop intellectual understanding, confidence and social and collective responsibility. From its inception in 1903 the WEA has been committed to contributing towards a more just society through education. Whilst this principle has broadened to take account of political and social changes it continues to be a central and defining feature of the Association with a commitment to provide in particular for *'those who are socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged'* - WEA Articles of Association 3.2.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is central to the vision and values of the Association:

'A better world – equal, democratic and just; through adult education the WEA challenges and inspires individuals, communities and society'.

Values: democratic, equal, inclusive, accessible and open.

1. The Context

- 1.1 The WEA has Memorandum and Articles of Association which commit the Association to take positive steps towards implementing equalities practices in all areas of its work.
- 1.2 The Association will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation (Equality Act 2010) and where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements signalled under EU directives and national legislation.
- 1.3 This policy is intended to underpin a range of explicit and detailed associated policies, protocols and procedures which together ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of Equalities measures within the organisation at all levels
- 1.4 The Equality Policy sets out our commitment to providing outstanding teaching, support and services to the diverse communities we serve through our strategic intent and operational plans.
- 1.5 The Equality policy operates within the context of the Equality Act 2010. This was produced to streamline, simplify and strengthen equality legislation through a single act and replaces all previous legislation. The Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics, these are:

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1. **Age** - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
2. **Disability** - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
3. **Gender reassignment** - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
4. **Marriage and civil partnership** - Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
5. **Pregnancy and maternity** - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
6. **Race** - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
7. **Religion and belief** - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
8. **Sex** - A man or a woman.
9. **Sexual orientation** - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

1.6 Poverty In addition to our statutory duties the WEA wishes to recognise that poverty and income inequality are also a key issue in our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The WEA also recognises that poverty can substantially contribute to the social exclusion of people with protected characteristics but can also affect the lives of individuals without any protected characteristics. The WEA approach emphasises that issues of concern are both low income and the other factors relating to severe and chronic disadvantage, and that these are closely connected.

2. Legal Duties

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have three public duties we aim to meet as we work towards our mission:

2.1 Advance equality of opportunity

This is fundamental part of the WEA's mission and values. The WEA will work to ensure that every individual reaches their full potential regardless of their personal identity and/or characteristics or socio-economic status. The WEA will make all

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reasonable adjustments to its provision, TL&A resources, access and other publications to enable equal access for all individuals and groups.

2.2 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The WEA operates a zero tolerance policy to discrimination. We perceive this to be a minimum standard that all staff, students, volunteers and members, partners and visitors will achieve.

The WEA will ensure that procedures for challenging all forms of bullying and discrimination, harassment and unacceptable behaviour are widely promoted.

2.3 Foster good relations

The WEA will pro-actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion. It will ensure that students, volunteers, members and staff have an understanding and appreciation for the diversity and difference that goes to make up the society in which we live and work.

3. Terminology

- 3.1 **Equality** – enables everyone to participate and have opportunities to achieve their potential. In this way we help create a “fairer society”. An equalities approach recognises that our social identity can impact on life and educational experience.
- 3.2 **Diversity**- focuses on acknowledging and valuing the individual differences of our students, staff and volunteers and the ways in which these can enrich the association at all levels of the organisation.
- 3.3 **Inclusion** – is about everyone who is part of the WEA; all students, staff, volunteers, members, partners and other stakeholders. It involves taking action to remove barriers to participation and learning. Inclusion also involves eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 Recognising that the lives of individuals are damaged by discrimination at all levels of society; the Association believes that education plays a major role in challenging discrimination and disadvantage.
- 4.2 The Association promotes full and lifelong access to education as necessary for the development of an open and democratic society.
- 4.3 The Association upholds the right of everyone to be treated with respect and dignity in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experience is valued.

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- 4.4 The Association will strive to remove barriers to involvement at all levels and to encourage and celebrate diversity by enabling students to determine their own educational needs and priorities at a local level. The Association aspires to equality of opportunity and of outcomes for all.
- 4.5 No one involved with the work of the Association will receive less favourable treatment because of any of the protected characteristics listed above and in addition; parental status, HIV status, political belief or social or economic class.
- 4.6 The Association 'shall oppose discrimination in matters of all protected characteristics, and shall operate within an equal opportunities policy framework for the delivery of its education, for its employment practices, and for the organisation of its voluntary membership' - *Articles of Association 4.4*

5. Educational Provision

With regard to its provision the Association will;

- implement 'Inclusive Learning' by paying particular attention to programme design and delivery to maximise the match between the needs of individual learners and the educational opportunities provided,
- ensure good practice in teaching and learning and assessment,
- support the development of effective student support services,
- establish and maintain outreach educational provision in community venues and in workplace contexts in order to widen participation wherever possible,
- develop programmes in response to expressed needs and demands in local communities from individuals and organisations,
- ensure that Association strategic plans and Association and Regional operational plans include specific measurable targets to promote Equality and Diversity and Inclusion.

6. Voluntary Participation and Governance

The WEA believes that democratic voluntary participation in its organisation and decision-making processes promotes mutuality, and builds the capacity of the organisation. The Association will therefore;

- maintain organisational structures that place students at the heart of all decision making, particularly in the governance of the Association,
- encourage full voluntary involvement at all levels of the Association, (Local, Regional and Association), and underpin that involvement with appropriate training and support,

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- enable students to be directly involved in the development of their programmes through Branch and Regional committees and councils and arrangements with external partners,
- actively seek involvement from underrepresented groups within the membership and governance structures of the Association at all levels.

7. Employment Practices

The WEA is committed to ensuring that all staff and prospective staff are treated fairly and equitably on their relevant merits and abilities and within the requirements of their employment. The WEA aims to actively encourage a climate of respect, dignity at work and value in all aspects of employment practice.

7.1 Employment Policies and Procedures

In order to ensure this the WEA has a range of policies, procedures and commitments, which are reviewed on a regular basis. These include:

- Recruitment and Reference policy and procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Capability and Disciplinary policy and procedures
- Grievance, Harassment and Bullying policy and procedures
- Performance management and Annual Staff Review policy and procedure
- Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Personal, Family and Domestic Leave policy and procedures
- Annual Leave policy and procedures
- Induction policy and procedure
- Probation policy and procedure
- Flexible Working and Job Share policy and procedures
- Job Descriptions policy
- Managing Absence policy
- Job Security and Redundancy policy and procedures
- Leavers policy and procedures
- Health and Safety policy and procedures (inc Stress Management)
- Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Staff Development and Training policy and procedure
- Whistleblowing policy and procedures
- Dignity At Work Statement

7.2 Implementation

Principles and policies are of limited value unless steps are taken to apply them; thereby ensuring that Equalities measures are embedded in the practice of the organisation at all levels. Accordingly;

7.2.1 This Policy Statement will be implemented through the actions set out in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan,(the full Single Equality Scheme can be

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found at www.wea.org.uk) and will inform the Association's Strategic Plan and Association and Regional Operational Plans.

7.2.2 Appropriate training and support for employees and members and other volunteers will support the implementation of the Policy where necessary.

7.2.3 The Policy will be subject to annual monitoring and review by the Equality and Diversity Scrutiny Panel, and agreed by Association Management Team and Trustees.

8. Location of Responsibility

The responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion lies with everyone. The WEA will ensure that staff, tutors, volunteers, members and students are made aware of the policy and understand their personal responsibilities as well as the Association's collective approaches to promoting Equality Diversity and Inclusion and its commitment to Inclusive Learning

Governance

Ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the Equality and Diversity measures lies with the Trustees of the Association. It is their role to oversee senior management through performance management systems.

The Equality and Diversity Scrutiny Panel (EDSP) monitors and reviews Equality and Diversity measures on behalf of the Trustees.

Management

The Association Management Team will be the key management level for ensuring the policy informs practice at Association level. The Association Management Team is supported in this by the national Strategic Lead for Equality and Diversity.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network (EDICN) will actively share best practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the Association and support regions and Association Services teams in assessing our EDI practice.

At Regional level responsibility for the implementation of Equality and Diversity measures rests with Regional Directors, Regional Committees and Regional management staff.

Responsibilities of Individual Staff

In order to ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy is put into practice individual members of staff should:

- Seek actively to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of their work.
- Respond to individual needs of those they work with (including students, other staff, volunteers etc.)

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- Foster an environment in which compliance with this policy is regarded as integral to their work
- Work to tackle and effectively eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Not victimise any person who has complained, including complaints of harassment or unfair discrimination, or who has given information in connection with such a complaint.

Responsibilities of students and volunteers

All students and volunteers are responsible for adhering to the Code of Conduct and treating others with courtesy and respect.

9. Monitoring and Review

All Self-Assessment Reports must include;

- what equality arrangements have been made during the previous year,
- how effective the equality arrangements were,
- specific equality and diversity measures for the subsequent action plans.

Data on participation levels for all areas of the Associations activity will be available and compared on an annual basis with National statistics.

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Appendix 1

The Structure for planning, managing and monitoring Equality and Diversity in the WEA

Meeting type and frequency	Members	Remit
<p>Equality and Diversity Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>Meeting 3 times a year</p>	<p>Deputy President – Chair and Champion - Trustees General Secretary – Champion –AMT External Trustee Internal Trustee SMT member Strategic Lead for Equality and Diversity Representative from Champions Network HR Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set overall Strategic Aims for Equality and Diversity. • Agree plans and schemes and other actions. • Plan schemes and other actions within AMT/ AC and Trustees. • Scrutinise implementation of Action Plan.
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network an</p> <p>Face to face twice a year plus tele - conferences as and when and E-mail and use of intranet and blog</p>	<p>Made up from reps from region staff, Directorates plus the Operations Team</p> <p>Deputy President - Strategic Lead for Equality and Diversity External Trustee Member of Regional Committee with EDI Champion role. 1 representative from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Each Region and Scotland who also acts as Champion within this/her region – Member of MVM – Member of Operations Team (admin) – Finance staff member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as the main forum for Sharing good practice across the Association • Take forward the action plans within their regions. • Set up working groups for taking forward specific areas e.g. organising internal or external seminars or workshops, Link with Quality Improvement Team • Link with REM group • Link with Training board • Other groups to be confirmed.

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