

Equality and Diversity Policy

Updated on: 18th March 2024

NOTE: This policy applies to all activities performed by or on behalf of Rotary GB&I at national or district level and references to Rotary clubs are so worded as each Rotary club is autonomous subject to compliance with RI, Rotary GB&I and club constitutions.

1. Purpose

1.1 Statement of Intent

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (Rotary GB&I) is committed to promoting equality, fairness and respect. We aim to create an environment where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated. We will provide equal opportunities for all Rotarians to develop and to fulfil their potential. We will engage fully with our diverse society. We will take care to assess the impact of our policies and their implementation on race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion and belief, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sex or sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and age equality. These are the 'Protected Characteristics' contained in the Equality Act 2010, and they also correspond broadly with the headings under which citizens are legally protected from discrimination in employment and other aspects of participation in society, in equality legislation in the Republic of Ireland, namely the Equal Status Act 2000 as amended by the Equality Act 2004. This policy is to be linked with the Rotary GB&I Dignity Policy (rev. April 18) as approved by General Council in November 2017 (D. GC 2017/18:18)

1.2 What is Diversity?

When people think of diversity, they may think first of ethnicity and race and then gender. However, diversity is much broader than that.

Diversity includes, but is not limited to: age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, physical abilities or qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, partnership status, religion or belief, parental status, caring responsibilities and work experience. Diversity management can be broadly defined as accepting, valuing and getting the best from all individuals whatever their group or individual differences such as communications style, career or vocational experiences and other factors.

“Every Rotarian, whatever they look like and however they operate, maximises their potential and value to the team. Everyone is valued as an individual as well as a member of the team. Everyone is themselves and seeks to be successful as themselves rather than conforming to a mould.”

In short, every individual has a right to their own success and a responsibility to the success of the team. They have a right to celebrate individuality and a responsibility to conform to the team’s policies, ethos and codes of behaviour.

1.3 What is Discrimination?

Rotary GB&I is committed to maintaining an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment of other people including current or prospective members and employees. The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified.

- Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- 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.

2. Policy

Rotary GB&I is committed to providing excellent diversity and equality of opportunity. Rotary GB&I objectives are to promote and develop diversity initiatives with a view to matching and, if possible, improving on best practice. It actively endorses relevant programmes of action and codes of practice on all aspects of diversity. Rotary GB&I aims to provide an environment where we will:

- Encourage Rotary Clubs to recruit membership that reflects, at all levels, the diversity of the communities where they operate and of society as a whole.
- Treat all our members, employees and outside contacts with dignity and respect.
- Provide Rotarians with the opportunity to develop and realise their full potential.
- Take positive action to secure equality of opportunity.
- Ensure that our recruitment, selection, and Rotary career progression processes are fair, objective and free from bias or stereotyping.

- Endeavour to ensure that Rotary Clubs deliver excellent service to their respective diverse communities.

2.1 Objectives

Our diversity and equality objectives are focused on three key areas:

2.1.1 Service – we will:

- Strive to review all Rotary GB&I services from the perspective of the Rotary GB&I diversity principles to ensure they meet the differing needs of individuals and groups.
- Provide clear information about Rotary GB&I services in ways that are accessible and meet the community needs.
- Monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- Consult with different groups on service needs and provision.
- Monitor and evaluate services to ensure that they do not unfairly discriminate.
- Ensure equal access to the Rotary GB&I complaints procedure.
- Assess our policies, functions and practices to consider their impact on equality in line with legal requirements and best practice policy.

2.1.2 Recruitment and Retention – we will:

- Encourage Rotary Clubs to recruit members that represent the makeup of the regional population in terms of race, gender and disability.
- Monitor the selection process to ensure it is free from discrimination and openly accountable. Any information provided in this respect is voluntary and will not adversely

affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their membership or employment.

- Review and monitor all other policies and procedures to ensure that they do not inadvertently allow unfair discrimination to occur.
- Ensure that access to information, procedures and records is as open and transparent as possible.
- Encourage Rotary Clubs to provide a safe and accessible environment, which values and respects individuals' identities and cultures.
- Encourage a culture and environment free from discrimination and harassment.
- Develop a culture which encourages Rotary networks to share best practice and provide specific support to diverse groups.
- Encourage and help Rotarians to reach their full potential.
- Assess our policies, functions and practices to consider their impact on equality in line with legal requirements and best practice policy.

2.1.3 Working in Partnership – we will:

- Work with others in partnership to endeavour to provide an environment free from unfair discrimination and harassment.
- Encourage others to adopt this policy.

2.2 Who is responsible for this policy?

Each club president has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. Day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Rotary GB&I compliance officer. All club presidents must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Club presidents will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment.

The Rotary GB&I compliance officer has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Rotary GB&I compliance officer. If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Rotary GB&I compliance officer to request further information. Members are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it may be improved by contacting the Rotary GB&I Compliance Officer.

3. Breaches of this policy

Rotary GB&I will take a strict approach to breaches of this policy. Complaints should be reported in accordance with the Rotary GB&I Dispute Management Procedures and will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate. There must be no victimisation or retaliation against members who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will result in exclusion from the organisation and/or disciplinary action.

You can contact us regarding this policy by emailing compliance@rotarygbi.org.