

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) & Arthur Findlay College (AFC)

1. Policy Statement

The Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) EDI Policy has been introduced for use at Head Office, Arthur Findlay College, all charity subsidiaries, National, District and Church levels in all its activities across the United Kingdom and overseas.

The SNU is committed to fostering an environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are fully aligned with the SNU's values and the Seven Principles of SNU Spiritualism.

We strive to ensure that our Union—its churches, centres, activities, education courses, public services and workspaces—are open and accessible to all.

The SNU does not tolerate discrimination, prejudice, harassment or victimisation on any grounds. We recognise and value the diverse experiences, perspectives and talents of all individual members, volunteers, employees, ministers, trainees, students and visitors.

The SNU will integrate its EDI Policy in all other organisational policies and procedures as appropriate.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

Outlines the SNU's commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive religious, charitable, educational, and workplace environments, ensuring that members, volunteers, employees, ministers, trainees, students, and visitors all have the opportunity to realize their full potential.

Promote equity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance inclusion.

Ensure all individuals have equal opportunity to participate in SNU activities and services.

Remove or reduce barriers that impede full participation.

Create a culture and inclusion in which diversity is welcomed and celebrated.

Comply with all relevant UK equality legislation.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

All SNU employees, volunteers, ministers and officiants.

All SNU churches, districts, affiliated bodies and training organisations.

Members, students, service users and visitors.

All activities, events, training courses and communications conducted under the auspices of the SNU.

4. Legal Framework - Relevant UK Legislation

The SNU is committed to meeting the requirements of UK equity and human rights law, including but not limited to:

4.1 Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of the nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Act places a duty on organisations to:

- Prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- Promote equal opportunity and good relations between different groups.

4.2 Human Rights Act 1998

Supports the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, and the right to respect for private life.

4.3 Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR

Ensures fair and lawful processing of personal and sensitive data, including information relating to protected characteristics.

4.4 Employment Rights Act 1996 & Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Ensures fair treatment of workers and a safe environment for all who engage in SNU activities.

4.5 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 – (Northern Ireland)

The Equality Commission has responsibility for enforcing the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), as amended, in Northern Ireland. It also has a legal duty to work towards the elimination of discrimination against disabled people, to promote the equalisation of opportunities for disabled people, and to keep under review the working of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

5. Definitions

5.1 A set of definitions used in this policy is set out in Appendix A.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 National Executive Committee and Sub committees

- Ensure the organisation complies with legal responsibilities.
- Provide strategic direction and leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic; and foster good relations between people who share and those who do not share a protected characteristic. The Board of Governors are responsible for the approval and oversight of the implementation of equality, diversity and inclusivity policies and strategies.

6.2 Churches, Centres and District Councils

- Implement this policy in local contexts.
- Promote inclusive practices in worship, divine services, education courses and our community work.

6.3 Employees, Tutors and Volunteers - See Appendix B Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

- Treat all people with respect, dignity, and fairness.
- Report concerns about discrimination or harassment.
- Participate in relevant EDI training.
- Ensuring that curriculum design, teaching, assessment, and student support are conducted in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (including indirect discrimination).
- Supporting, implementing, and abiding by the aims and contents of this policy statement.

- Using their role to promote equality of opportunity for students and staff.
- Contributing to an inclusive culture which celebrates diversity, and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, as set out by the Positive Work Environment Policy.

6.4 Managers

- Ensuring staff and students are encouraged and enabled to reach their full potential, irrespective of their background or protected characteristics.
- Fulfilling their legal duty to ensure reasonable adjustments are made for students and staff, in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- Demonstrating a high standard of behaviour and setting clear expectations to staff on what behaviour is acceptable and expected at work, as set out by the Dignity and respect Policy.
- Conduct Equality Analysis on relevant policies and procedures to demonstrate that they have paid due regard to the needs of individuals with protected characteristics.
- Fostering a culture in which staff feel able to challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Taking appropriate action to stop unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, harassment and victimisation, as set out by the Positive Work Environment Policy, and by the Equality Act 2010.

- Ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline, and grievance are carried out to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (including indirect discrimination).

6.5 Members and Visitors

- Engage respectfully with others.
- Support the inclusive ethos of the SNU.

6.6 Students

- Abiding by the aims and contents of this policy statement.
- Complying with the standards of conduct set out in the Student Conduct Policy.
- Contributing to an inclusive culture which celebrates diversity, and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Reporting any witnessed or suspected incidents of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

7. Commitment to Reasonable Adjustments

The SNU is committed to making reasonable adjustments for people with a protected characteristic and those with additional needs so they can fully participate in SNU activities.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Providing accessible meeting spaces and facilities.
- Providing information in alternative formats (large print, audio, easy read).
- Ensuring online and hybrid participation options where reasonable.
- Adjusting education, services, or assessment methods.
- Allowing assistance dogs, carers, or support workers.
- Providing hearing loops or visual aids.
- Modifying physical layouts to aid mobility.
- Adjusting schedules or break times based on individual needs.
- Ensuring people can make requests and ask questions verbally if that is their preferred method.
- Requests for adjustments will be managed sensitively, confidentially, and promptly.

Reasonable adjustments are tailored to everyone to ensure we can provide appropriate support. If you are able, please email snu@snu.org.uk with an overview of the adjustment you require. If writing is not possible, you can call Head Office, where a member of our team will be happy to record the information and add it to your membership record.'

8. Implementing Inclusive Practice

To support equality and inclusion, the SNU will:

- Promote diverse representation within our leadership, committees, and commissions.
- Ensure recruitment, education courses and volunteer opportunities reflect fairness and accessibility.
- Use inclusive language and imagery in communications.
- Encourage feedback from our individual members, employees, students, visitors, and service users from diverse backgrounds.

- Regularly review policies, practices, and facilities for accessibility.
- Provide ongoing EDI training to ministers, tutors, employees, and volunteers.

9. Communication

This policy is available to all members, employees, students, tutors, volunteers, visitors, and the public from the SNU website. Alternative formats can be obtained from the SNU Head Office.

SNU webpages will facilitate communication with members, employees, students, tutors, volunteers, visitors, and the public. They will provide an opportunity for SNU stakeholders to track the progress of equality, diversity and inclusivity initiatives and access published documents. They will also sit alongside the employee handbook as a source of equalities data and guidance to assist SNU staff.

10. Addressing Concerns and Complaints

The SNU will take very seriously breaches of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Policy by anyone within the scope of this policy. Any breaches will be investigated with the intent of resolving such matters. Where appropriate, such instances may be considered under the relevant disciplinary policy for staff or Student Conduct Policy for students.

Anyone who experiences or observes discrimination, harassment or exclusion is encouraged to report it.

Any breaches relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or hate incidents (this could be experienced as bullying relating to a protected characteristic) should be addressed through the following approaches:

10.1: Church Members, Local church officers and District Council officers in the first instance, where this is not possible SNU Head Office.

10.2: Individual Members and anyone else in the scope of this policy may raise concerns in writing through the SNU complaints procedure. If writing is not possible, you can call Head Office, where a member of our team will be happy to assist.

10.3: Employees should raise this in the first instance with their line manager, Where the concern relates to your line manager and cannot be addressed directly, it should instead be raised with their manager.

10.4: Students may address this informally or formally by raising concerns with their tutor and/or course organiser.

All concerns will be:

- Taken seriously.
- Investigated promptly
- Addressed in line with SNU complaints procedures.
- Treated with confidentiality wherever possible.
- No one will suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern (SNU Whistleblowing policy).

11. Monitoring and Review

The SNU will:

- Monitor participation, feedback and outcomes to identify inequalities.
- Review this policy every two years, or sooner if legislation or organisational needs change.
- Measure progress against EDI objectives set at local and national levels.

12. Policy Approval and Version Control

Approved by: SNU National Executive Committee

Policy Owner: SNU National EDI Lead / National Council/Chief Operating Officer

Review Cycle: 2 years

Appendix A: Definitions

Direct discrimination: Actions where people are treated less favourably than others on grounds related to their identity as one of the above protected groups.

Discrimination: Treating someone unfavourably because of a protected characteristic. This includes direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

Diversity: Recognising, valuing, and respecting the differences between people.

Equality: A situation where all can participate and where everyone can fulfil their potential.

Equal opportunity: This is the right of individuals and protected groups to equality of access and outcome in employment and service delivery.

Equality Analysis: Equality Analysis is a way of considering the effect on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act. There are two reasons for this:
• To consider if there are any unintended consequences for some groups.
• To consider if the activity being analysed will be fully effective for all target groups.

It involves using equality information, and the results of engagement with protected groups and others, to understand the actual effect or the potential effect of your functions, policies or decisions. It can help you to identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects or discrimination, to advance equality and to foster good relations.

Equity: Refers to fairness in treatment and providing individuals with what they need to succeed

Harassment: There are three types of harassment which are unlawful under the Equality Act:
• Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
• Sexual harassment.
• Less favourable treatment of a person because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

Pregnancy and maternity are not protected directly under harassment provisions; however, unwanted sexual behaviour will amount to harassment related to sex.

Indirect discrimination: This occurs where a condition or requirement has been put in place which applies to all, but, in practice, has a detrimental effect upon a group of individuals that cannot be fully justified.

Inclusion: Actively creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, supported and able to contribute. Inclusion is to foster a learning environment that allows and enables people with different backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, opinions and ways of thinking to work together, grow together and flourish.

Positive action: This is action taken by an organisation to provide development opportunities for 'Protected groups' who are demonstrably and statistically under-represented within the University.

Protected groups: Equality legislation currently provides protection against unlawful discrimination in employment and service delivery for these protected characteristics:
Age
Disability

Gender reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity
Race
Religion and Belief
Sex
Sexual orientation

Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias): When we make judgments or decisions about an individual or group of people based on our prior experiences, our own deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions, social stereotypes or interpretations. Much of the time we are unaware that we are doing it, hence 'unconscious'. Actively choosing to judge or make decisions about someone because of who they are is prejudice.

Victimisation: This is the treatment of someone less favourably because they have made or might make a complaint about discrimination under one of the above protected group categories.

Appendix B: Equality, Inclusion and Diversity – In the Workplace

The Company is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment.

The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy. Equality means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. Inclusion means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. Diversity means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce. We will actively support diversity and inclusion and ensure that all our employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles, and circumstances. All job applicants, employees, and workers, including agency workers, are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our Company as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Company.

Management will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no job applicant, employee, or worker receiving less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 which are race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin and caste; religion or belief; disability; sex; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; and age. In accordance with our overarching equal treatment ethos, we will also ensure that no one is treated less favourably on account of their trade union membership or non-membership or based on being a part-time worker or fixed-term employee. The Company's objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and otherwise treated solely based on their relevant aptitudes, skills, and abilities.

We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance, and particularly any relevant Codes of Practice.

Management has the primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:

- **not discriminating during engagement against employees, workers or job applicants.**
- **not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination.**
- **bringing to the attention of our workforce that they may be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure, or other appropriate action, for unlawful discrimination of any kind.**

You can contribute by:

- **not discriminating against fellow employees, workers, customers, clients, suppliers or members of the public with whom you come into contact during your duties.**

- **not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination.**
- **reporting any discriminatory action to your Line Manager.**

The successful achievement of these objectives necessitates a contribution from everyone, and you have an obligation to report any act of discrimination known to you.

If you consider that you are a victim of unlawful discrimination you may raise the issue through the grievance procedure.