



## **1. Policy Statement**

West Somerset Green Forum is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and treatment for everyone who is associated in any way with the Forum, whether through membership, receipt of services (e.g. through our fuel poverty and community woodland initiatives), project involvement, attendance at meetings or events or by any other means.

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a particular characteristic. We accept that discrimination in any form is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

We aim to address any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or isolation on the grounds of age, race, social class, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, health status, language (whether related to home tongue, social class or other factors), unrelated criminal conviction, political belief or any other factor.

We aim to encourage a culture, through our various projects and activities, that respects and values each other's needs and differences, and to take a genuinely inclusive approach to all our activities. We see this approach as an asset to our work as it enables us both to recognise our own strengths and differences and to reach and respect the widest possible spectrum of our local community.

We also recognise that while the opportunities, services, or information the Forum might offer should be available to all members of our community, we should respect the choice of those people who may simply not want them.

We will distribute this policy to all the Forum's members and volunteers, and to anyone who contacts us about the Forum's work.

We will ensure that we pursue any complaints or concerns about discrimination in any form in relation to any of the Forum's activities.

## **2. Legally Protected Characteristics**

While we are committed to challenging discrimination on any basis whatsoever, there are certain characteristics which are protected from discrimination by law. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of the following factors:

- age
- disability

- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Protection from discrimination applies:

- at work
- in education
- as a consumer
- when using public services
- when buying or renting property
- as a member or guest of a private club or association.

Protection from discrimination also applies if:

- a person is associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a family member or friend.
- a person has complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

You can find more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights>

### **3. Addressing Complaints or Concerns**

Anyone who feels that they or another person has been the subject of discrimination in the context of the Green Forum's activities is invited to contact the Green Forum secretary (email [wsforum21@gmail.com](mailto:wsforum21@gmail.com)) or, if wished, a member of the Board who will be obliged to respond, in order for the information to be passed on to the designated Board Member for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The details of Board members are on the are on the WSGF website (<https://www.westsomersetgreenforum.com/about>) and on the WSGF entry at Companies House'?

WSGF entry at Companies House. We recognise that anyone raising a complaint or concern should be protected from being victimised because they have done so: all concerns will be addressed with respect and confidentiality.

In some cases, there may be a requirement for certain details to be made known to others for an issue to be investigated effectively. In such a case, this will be discussed fully with those involved prior to any such action being taken to the appropriate level e.g. exclusion from WSGF or a report to the police .