



**Young Farmers'
Clubs of Ulster**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Policy Details

Document Details **Ulster**

Equal Opportunities Policy

Young Farmers' Clubs of

Accountability

All employees Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Overview of Policy

To make sure that we reduce the risk of any exploitation or disadvantage occurring to any individual in the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster and this policy applies to all staff and volunteers to make sure that the organisation has a culture embracing culture and diversity within our society.

To ensure that Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster offers fair and equal opportunities to ex-offenders and is committed to compliance with laws and regulations.

Section 1

Introduction to Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) was founded in 1929 and is an open, non-political body operating by means of an association of individual clubs throughout Northern Ireland. YFCU is the largest rural youth organisation in Northern Ireland. It provides a support network to young people to the rural community and offers members a range of training opportunities, competitions, travel and exchanges.

Vision:

The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster's vision is of a robust rural community which recognises and values all young people as key stakeholders.

Mission:

Our mission is to encourage individual development, creativity, initiative and contribution for the benefit of members, the Association, industry and community.

Section 2

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster wholeheartedly supports the principles of equal opportunities in employment and recruitment and is opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of marital or civil partnership status, religious belief or political opinion, disability, race or ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, age or criminal history.

The organisation is committed to recruiting and developing a team of staff and volunteers which reflects the diversity of the wider community in which we live, and which provides a quality service for those needing support within the rural community in Northern Ireland.

The organisation is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and volunteers will be treated fairly and not discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

This Equal Opportunities Policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the resources of staff and volunteers will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for the organisation.

Equality Commitments

The organisation is committed to:

- promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and volunteers
- providing all employees and managers with a copy of this policy and explaining it to them
- providing equality training and guidance as appropriate
- ensuring that all complaints of discrimination or harassment are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially and in accordance with our internal grievance procedures
- setting a good example by treating employees with fairness, dignity and respect
- being alert to unacceptable behaviour and taking appropriate action to stop it.
- monitoring all incidents of discrimination and harassment and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy periodically.

Implementation

The CEO has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each local group has responsibility to implement the policy at county level.

Employee and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers are required to comply with this policy. They must treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment against any other person, such as their co-workers, our job applicants or our customers. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

Equal Opportunities and Recruitment, including of Ex-Offenders

1. Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
3. YFCU are committed to equality of opportunity, to following practices, and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. YFCU actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.
5. We will request an AccessNI Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where an AccessNI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or

position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that YFCU will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check

6. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), YFCU will only ask about convictions which are defined as “not protected” for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.
7. We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned e.g. the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.
8. YFCU may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate.
9. We ensure that all those in YFCU who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).
10. We undertake to make every subject of an AccessNI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR YOU FROM WORKING WITH YFCU THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE.

Monitoring and review

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster is registered with the Equality Commission for the purposes of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998. As such we are obliged to monitor the community background and sex of all job applicants and workforce. We are also obliged to review the composition of our workforce and our employment policies and practices every three years and, where appropriate, to consider taking affirmative action to promote fair participation between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. We are committed to complying with these duties and have set up suitable arrangements to ensure that we do so.

Complaints

Staff or volunteers who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the organisation's Grievance Procedure. A copy of this procedure is available in the Contract of Employment or from the CEO. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

The organisation's internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of the employee to pursue complaints under the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003, Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 and Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970.

Employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint first under the organisation's internal grievance procedure.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Review of this policy

This Policy will be reviewed every three years in consultation with staff, volunteers and those who engage in our services.

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE ON WEARING EMBLEMS AT WORK

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster is committed to maintaining a harmonious and non-threatening environment in its premises. The display of any national, political or religious flags, emblems or posters and the circulation of sectarian materials is prohibited. With regards to staff and volunteers wearing emblems, the organisation has adopted the Equality Commission guidelines and staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the following guidelines.

1. Emblems which the Fair Employment Tribunal has specifically identified as having a "sectarian significance" whether intended or not, e.g. Rangers and Celtic football shirts, are not acceptable.
2. Emblems or displays which are directly linked to the community conflict over the past 30 years and/or local politics clearly have the potential to cause disruption to the good and harmonious working environment, e.g. "Ulster Says No" badges, Easter Lilies, Spirit of Drumcree badges, Bloody Sunday ribbons, Saoirse ribbons, orange lilies/regalia etc. Such emblems or displays are not acceptable.
3. Emblems which do tend to distinguish one community from the other in Northern Ireland but are not directly connected with the community strife are unlikely to be regarded as creating an intimidating or hostile working environment as described in the Code of Practice. In this category would fall, marks of religious observance, crosses, crucifixes, ashes, pioneer pins, Christian Unions badges, fáinnes, as well as poppies and shamrock, when worn with decorum and at the appropriate period.

The examples referred to above are not an exhaustive list.

Staff and volunteers must be aware that there may be times when working in the community that for reasons of personal safety it may not be appropriate or safe to wear any type of emblem. On these occasions the CEO may be required to make a decision on the appropriateness of wearing a particular emblem which staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to.

Staff and volunteers are required to comply with this Equal Opportunities Policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

Please sign and return this page to the Personnel and Admin Manager.

Staff/Volunteer Acceptance

I have read and understood the Equal Opportunities Policy and agree to abide by the requirements laid down:

Signature:

Date:

Print Name:
