

Suffolk Libraries

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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2 INTRODUCTION

Suffolk Libraries aims to enrich everyone's the quality of life. To do this equality and inclusion must be at the heart of all we do.

We create safe, welcoming spaces for everyone in our communities regardless of age, gender, race, socio-economic background or beliefs. Libraries can play a part in fostering strong and cohesive communities by promoting understanding, trust and respect. Libraries facilitate this through running events and activities, providing relevant content and information and giving different people the chance to meet and come together.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to the services and facilities provided by Suffolk Libraries, staff, volunteers, library users, members of the public and contractors.

4 THE POLICY

Suffolk Libraries is fully committed to the letter and the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Consideration is also given to the needs of those living in isolated rural communities who are not covered by the list of protected characteristics above, but who may face difficulties accessing services.

Suffolk Libraries aims to treat all its customers fairly, with dignity and respect as it expects them to treat other users and staff.

To achieve this Suffolk Libraries will:

- Train Staff in their duties under the Equality Act and raise awareness of how they interact with the public
- Provide a welcoming environment where everyone feels at ease
- Provide free Wi-Fi and computers with appropriate software and hardware to help those with physical and visual impairments, along with staff assistance if required
- Monitor its buildings to ensure they are fully accessible and provide assistive equipment as appropriate, such as automatic doors, hearing loops and evac chairs; ensure interiors are designed to help those with dementia and visual impairment with space for wheelchairs to manoeuvre; a selection of chairs suitable for different conditions are provided; appropriate light levels
- Provide stock in a variety of formats either printed or digitally
- Provide stock appropriate to differing reading levels and ages

- Provide materials in languages spoken in the communities

Suffolk Libraries also aims to reflect the diversity and views of the communities it serves.

- Through relevant activities and events, exhibitions and displays
- Purchasing stock to reflect the diversity of our communities
- Providing relevant information
- By recruiting staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve

Suffolk Libraries wants to draw on and reflect the full range of backgrounds and perspectives in our communities as libraries are places to share views and ideas. However, those views can at times be uncomfortable and even offensive to some. Therefore, Suffolk Libraries must remain impartial and provide alternative views when deemed appropriate.

Suffolk Libraries will not tolerate any expression of hatred directed towards staff or other users on account of their protected characteristics or anything that promotes such opinions. It will take appropriate action against those who behave in this way. Any written materials found to be expressing such views will be removed.

Suffolk Libraries will undertake equality impact assessments for new services as and when appropriate. It will also periodically review existing services to ensure they are still operating fairly for everyone.

Any complaints of discrimination or unfair treatment will be taken seriously and reported to the Compliance Manager (who functions as the Suffolk Libraries Equalities Officer) and who will organise a full investigation by senior management in accordance with the Suffolk Libraries Complaints Policy.