

Equality Policy and Procedures

Bat Conservation Ireland



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Policy statement

Bat Conservation Ireland is committed to equality and dignity for all, both as an employer and as a service provider, and believes in the vital contribution of diversity and difference to the effectiveness of the organisation. We strive to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer or service user is discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on the basis of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community. We aim to go beyond our legal requirements and proactively create an environment that respects and embraces diversity, taking positive action where necessary to redress equality imbalances.

1 General Principles

1.1 Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedural guidelines is to provide guidance on all aspects of equality at Bat Conservation Ireland.

1.2 Responsibility

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All Council members and staff are expected to cooperate and lead by example. All volunteers at Bat Conservation Ireland must comply and ensure that equality principles are respected.

1.3 Measures

These procedures outline the measures that will be taken to ensure that this policy is fully implemented.

1.4 Training and instruction

Bat Conservation Ireland commits to providing or organising training or instruction to staff to facilitate implementation of these policies and procedures.

1.5 Evaluation and review

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It should be given to the Chairperson who will ensure that it is considered by Council. The document will be reviewed in full consultation with all stakeholders on a regular basis, or as frequently as needed if circumstances change.

2 Definitions

2.1 Grounds for discrimination

Bat Conservation Ireland recognises discrimination on one or more of nine specified grounds, namely: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

2.2 Types of discrimination

Bat Conservation Ireland accepts that discrimination may be direct, indirect, imputed or by association.

2.3 Disability

Bat Conservation Ireland adopts the World Health Organisation definition of disability, namely: persons with disabilities are persons who:

- Have a significant and persistent mobility, sensory, learning or other physical or mental health impairment which may be permanent or temporary in nature;
- And experience functional restrictions or limitations of their ability to perform the range of life's activities; AND may experience attitudinal and/or environmental barriers that hamper their full and self-directed participation.

3 Equal Opportunities in Employment and Volunteering

3.1 General

No job applicant or employee will be discriminated against, in recruitment, selection, placement, training, career development, promotion, compensation, benefits and special leave entitlements. All individuals will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their abilities and merits only, and according to the requirements of the job. All employees will have equal opportunity to show ability and to progress within Bat Conservation Ireland. Where appropriate and permissible, positive action will be taken to give under-represented groups equality of opportunity within Bat Conservation Ireland.

3.2 Recruitment and Selection

The following measures will be adopted in the recruitment and selection procedure:

- Job requirements will be non-restrictive and flexible and distinguish between essential and desirable criteria and will be open to all suitably qualified applicants
- Recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy
- The organisation will seek to ensure that the recruitment process is free from any direct or indirect discrimination on any of the 9 grounds
- Job requirements will not overemphasise formal qualifications and work experience
- Where an applicant indicates that they have special needs, to facilitate their participation in the recruitment and selection process, reasonable accommodation will be provided, subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- An equal opportunities statement will appear on all job descriptions and advertisement.
- Advertisements will avoid discriminatory language and images.

- The assessment process will be objective and job relevant with procedures that minimise the potential for bias.
- Where possible, selection panels will be representative of society.
- Recruitment agencies where used will be informed of our equality policy and of the requirement to be non-discriminatory.
- If a medical test is found to be necessary, Bat Conservation Ireland will explore the outcomes with the employee, secure further medical opinion as necessary, implement a safety assessment of the workplace if needed, and make reasonable accommodations.

3.3 Induction

Bat Conservation Ireland will maintain an awareness of the specific individual needs of new recruits in the induction process to ensure a smooth transition to work. We will in addition undertake awareness-raising with existing staff to assist this transition.

3.4 Development, promotion, compensation and benefits

Bat Conservation Ireland will aim to achieve equal opportunities for all in training, job development and promotion. We will also ensure that the principles and practice of equal pay and benefits are respected.

3.5 Work/life balance

Bat Conservation Ireland recognises the importance of having policies which are family friendly and which recognise the need of all individuals for a work/life balance. We are committed to encouraging and facilitating where possible flexible work practices such as part-time working which enable staff to juggle competing life demands.

Bat Conservation Ireland will ensure that individuals who avail of these arrangements are treated fairly and are not subject to discrimination.

3.6 Volunteers

There are many similarities, though much less formality between the recruitment process and day-to-day management of Bat Conservation Ireland's volunteers. Where possible and appropriate, our equality procedures for volunteers will mirror those of paid staff.

4 Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery

4.1 General

Bat Conservation Ireland will aim to provide equal access for all to Bat Conservation Ireland's services. Where appropriate and permissible, positive action will be taken to give under-represented groups equality of opportunity to access Bat Conservation Ireland's services.

4.2 Membership and office accommodation

Bat Conservation Ireland welcomes applications for membership from groups representing all sectors of society and operates fair and consistent criteria in considering all applications. Allocation of premises space operates on a first come first served basis for groups who meet the relevant criteria and who are in a position to take up the offer, subject to the availability of space in Bat Conservation Ireland.

4.3 Meeting rooms and conference facilities

The cost effectiveness and extensive opening hours of Bat Conservation Ireland and its meeting/conference rooms promote their accessibility to all groups and individuals. All meeting rooms are wheelchair accessible and have access to a portable induction loop system to facilitate hearing aid wearers.

4.4 Training courses

- Training will be provided on the basis of individual needs and the requirements of the post held by the Employee.
- Selection for training will not be based on any of the nine grounds.
- Where an individual's disability impedes their ability to fully participate and engage in training activities, reasonable accommodation will be provided subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by part-time Employees, there is an expectation that part-time Employees will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work.

5. Accommodations for people with disabilities

Bat Conservation Ireland recognises that people with disabilities may have specific needs to facilitate their participation in terms of employment, volunteering or use of services. Such needs may include a sign language interpreter for an interview, re-allocation of marginal tasks or specific equipment in employment, training materials in alternative formats such as large print, or specific dietary requirements. Bat Conservation Ireland will endeavour to meet these needs within budgetary constraints pursuing all available grants or statutory or voluntary support schemes where financial outlay or other support is required.

6. Conditions of Employment

- Terms and conditions of employment will be applied fairly to all Employees, with no reference to any of the grounds in the Employment Equality Acts.
- The Organisation seeks to provide equal pay for like work.
- The Organisation endeavours to provide a work environment free from bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

7. Promotion and Re-Grading

- There will be equality of opportunity at all stages for promotion.
- Selection for promotion will be based on defined criteria related to the requirements of the post, and no reference will be made to the nine grounds in the selection process.

8. Classification of Posts

- Gender neutral job titles will be used and no reference will be made to any of the other eight grounds in classifying positions.

9. Reasonable Accommodation

- Reasonable accommodation shall be provided in order to facilitate a person with a disability to apply for positions with the Organisation, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in training activities as applicable.
- This commitment is subject to such reasonable accommodation not presenting a disproportionate burden on the Organisation, unless otherwise deemed appropriate.

10. Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Bat Conservation Ireland will treat any allegations of harassment, sexual or otherwise, with the utmost seriousness and pursue the relevant procedures without delay.

11. Complaints

Individuals who feel they have not been treated in accordance with the policy can pursue the matter through the relevant procedures. Anyone who chooses to take such action will not be treated adversely as a result.

12. Compliance

All staff and volunteers have a duty to comply with the provisions of this policy; those who do not may be subject to action under the disciplinary policy for paid staff and other relevant procedures for everyone else.

**** Relevant key legislation**

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015