

# **Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee's Equality and Diversity Policy**

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities. This applies to committee officers, members, associates, friends and all other affiliates of the committee involved in carnival concerts, procession and other related activities. The policy will be implemented within the framework of current legislation.

## **Policy**

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee recognises that in our society groups and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against.

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will aim to ensure that no member associate or affiliate, either current or potential, is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, cultural origin, religion, disability, experience of mental distress, HIV status, caring responsibility, class, education, employment status, political belief or unrelated criminal conviction (this is not an exhaustive list).

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee believes that members, associates or affiliates should not be excluded from any opportunity without due reason.

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee is committed to a programme of action to make this Equal Opportunities Policy effective. Our policy aims to ensure that no member, associate or affiliate :-

- Receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, sex or membership of any minority group
- Is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Members, associates and affiliates will not be discriminated against in the advice and support they are given. Nor will they be denied access to opportunities because of their assumed abilities, skills or behaviour and each volunteer will be judged on his/her own merits. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will actively encourage and support all members associates and affiliates in the performance and undertaking of their duties, roles and commitments.

## **Voting and appointment to the committee**

It is the intention of the organisation that voting and appointment decisions are based solely on the relevant merits and abilities of volunteers/members. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will require, therefore, that those

involved in appointing members/assigning duties do not discriminate, whether directly or indirectly, in the making of those decisions.

All volunteers for activities associated with Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee shall be given as much information and guidance as necessary to enable them to gauge their suitability for the role/duty.

Posts/duties will be aimed at as wide a group of suitable members, associates and affiliates as possible.

Application/nomination forms shall be as clear as possible and shall not be phrased in too narrow or restrictive terms. The application/nomination form will be free of personal questions, particularly those about marital status and number and ages of children.

All members, associates and affiliates shall be informed that the organisation operates an Equal Opportunities Policy. Such information will be conveyed in all application forms and advertisements. A copy of the Policy Statement will be provided to any member, associate or affiliate on request.

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will take an unbiased approach regardless of the member, associate or affiliate's race, gender, marital status, and will ask only questions, which relate to the task or duty, that are non-discriminatory. Questions relating to the following topics will not be asked when voting/nominating - marriage plans, marital status, occupation of spouse, number and age of children, family intentions, religious or political beliefs, race/nationality, sexual orientation.

Equal opportunities will be considered in all activities and resources. It is crucial that all volunteers are able to participate and enjoy the activities without discrimination. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will actively encourage members of groups from all sectors of the community to offer themselves for election to join the committee and/or other decision making or advisory sub committees.

### **Sex Discrimination**

The provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act apply to both Men and Women. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986 makes it unlawful, unless the duty or volunteering opportunity is covered by an exemption, to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marriage. Discrimination occurs when a condition, or requirement is applied which cannot be justified. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee fully supports the Sex Discrimination Acts.

Direct Sex Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of sex than a person of the other sex would be in the same circumstances.

Indirect Sex Discrimination may still occur when a requirement or condition is applied equally to men and women. Such a condition may nevertheless discriminate against one sex because the proportion of one sex, which can comply with it is much smaller than the proportion of the other sex that can comply with it.

Marriage Discrimination occurs when a married person is treated less favourably on the grounds of marital status than an unmarried person of the sex would be in the same circumstances, this discrimination may be direct or indirect as explained above.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee wishes to make it quite clear that sexual harassment is unlawful and views harassment very seriously.

The definition adopted by Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee is:

*Repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks which are offensive to the member, associate or affiliate involved, which cause that person to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed or which creates a threatening or intimidating environment.*

### **Racial Discrimination**

The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person directly or indirectly in the field of employment. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee fully supports the Race Relations Act.

Direct discrimination consists of treating a person differently and less favourable on the grounds of their racial origin.

Indirect discrimination consists of treating everyone the same but in a way, which results in some people not being able to comply where others from another racial background can.

Demands of Religion (e.g. prayer times and religious holidays) and of culture (traditional dress) are accepted.

### **Racial Harassment**

It is imperative that members, associates and affiliates are aware of legal commitments under Race Discrimination legislation and of its opposition to all forms of racism. Incidents include:

- Physical assaults/threats against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity.
- Racist insult/joke/name calling.
- Racist graffiti/any other written insult.
- Provocative behaviour (e.g. wearing racist badges or insignia).
- Racial comments in meetings conversation/workshops.
- Attempting to recruit for racist organisations or groups.
- Racist literature (leaflets, comics, magazines) brought into the organisation's premises.
- Providing a platform for racism.

## **Sexuality**

Lesbians and Gay men have no legal protection against discrimination, but as Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee is an equal opportunities organisation it is fully committed to the following policy provision.

Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will seek to overcome indirect discrimination by:

- Acknowledging the existence of Lesbians and Gay men either as members, associates, affiliates or participants/spectators of Carnival activities generally
- Provision of information about relevant support organisations.
- Making clear its expectations of members, associates and affiliates in the conduct of their duties in any circumstances where they represent Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee

People who are known (or perceived) to be Lesbian or Gay regularly experience harassment, verbal or physical assault in many areas of their lives including the workplace. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee will not tolerate this direct discrimination.

## **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 introduces new laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many disabled people face. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee supports the Disability Discrimination Act.

It is against the law for an employer or voluntary organisation to treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else because of his or her disability, unless there is good reason.

It is unlawful to victimise people or to knowingly help another person to discriminate. Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee wishes to encourage opportunities for people with disabilities and/or mental health issues.

## **Monitoring, review and responsibility**

The Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee officers will be responsible for implementing the equal opportunities policy. This may be delegated to a sub group (sub-committee). The co-ordinator will report to the general committee.

Any complaint or grievance should be made to the co-ordinator who will refer the matter to the Chairman of the Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee.

The equality and diversity policy will need to be reviewed annually. All aspects of the policy are monitored as an ongoing practice. An annual review will be carried out by the management committee.