

Strategic Plan Period: 2024-2026

Our ambition is for an abundance of community growing and nature places and spaces integral to the well-being of people and planet

VISION: People and communities reaching their full potential through Community Growing and Nature-Based activities as a part of everyday life

1. Statement of General Principles:

OUR MISSION: Supporting people and communities to improve the health and well-being of people and planet through Community Growing and Nature-Based activities

- 1.1. **Social Farms & Gardens (SF&G)** ethos is committed to supporting people and communities in nature-based activities and to equity, diversity and inclusion in programmes of work, access, recruitment, training and pay.
- 1.2. We are committed to taking a person-centred approach in our internal culture, in our work and delivery.
- 1.3. We are committed to:
 - 1.3.1. An environment and culture that celebrates and values difference, is inclusive and empowering and delivers mutual peer support in our strong relationships, collaborations and networks.
 - 1.3.2. Providing the appropriate and legally required information, training and supervision required to achieve 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.1 above.
 - 1.3.3. Recognising that this applies to our internal staff and fieldworkers as well as our members and those communities and organisations we work with.
 - 1.3.4. An understanding that this work is a process, and that we must understand and unpack any unspoken assumptions that might be held in our internal culture around what we mean by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).
 - 1.3.5. Achieving a working environment which provides equity of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination on Protected Characteristics + (see below for definitions).
 - 1.3.6. Removing any unfair and discriminatory practices and to encourage full contribution from diverse communities.
 - 1.3.7. Actively opposing all forms of discrimination.
 - 1.3.8. Listening and continuing consultation and communication with internal and external stakeholders.
- 1.4. We recognise and welcome different people from different backgrounds and with different experiences and the benefit that can bring to our work and its delivery.

1.5. **SF&G** believes in:

- 1.5.1. OUR VALUES: Land-based community development, mutual support, access to green space for all. We build strong relationships, collaborations and networks that are inclusive and empowering for communities and people
- 1.5.2. Providing a person-centred environment, understanding what matters to individuals.
- 1.5.3. Providing an environment where all (employees, potential employees, volunteers, contractors, and trustees - hereinafter 'staff' - visitors, beneficiaries and members) are welcomed, celebrated, challenged and encouraged to celebrate the best of themselves no matter their ability, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership status, race, colour, caste, language, religion, gender identity, political or other opinion or belief, nationality, pregnancy status, domestic responsibility status, socio-economic background, belief or non-believe or other status. (Protected Characteristics +), simply taking each other from where each is currently at.
- 1.5.4. Provision of services through the medium of English or national or locally used languages and support the use and learning other languages for the purposes of enabling staff to deliver themselves and their work more effectively (also see separate additional specific language policies).
- 1.5.5. Equalised and equitable opportunity that not only meets legal and social responsibilities but, through creating a more diverse workforce, promotes organisational effectiveness and improves the quality of working life.
- 1.5.6. Consistent and continual reviewing of our programme of work to ensure we are building on equality and equity of opportunity at Social Farms & Gardens for our staff, visitors, beneficiaries and members.

1.6. For all staff (full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent), visitors, beneficiaries and members we will:

- 1.6.1. Create a positive, actively welcoming and supportive environment.
- 1.6.2. Protect and safeguard from discrimination, inequality or harassment against those who may face this because of one or more of the protected characteristics that apply to them.
- 1.6.3. Provide equality of opportunity.
- 1.6.4. Promote diversity and combat discrimination in our work.
- 1.6.5. Respond to changing demographics and working patterns (e.g. reasonable adjustments to facilitate employment; positive action in recruitment, to encourage wider groups to apply for positions; flexibility with work, to retain valuable employees who have specific needs and meet organisational demands).
- 1.6.6. Value every individual and be willing and prepared to meet their needs.

- 1.7. This policy statement has been written with reference to relevant Standards and Regulations.

2. Definitions

This section sets out any particular definitions or anacronyms used in the rest of the policy or in related policies. These are definitions the EDI working group collated at point of policy adoption. We will work to refine these, where necessary, as part of our ongoing EDI work.

- 2.1. Equity: in the workplace is about ensuring all employees access the same opportunities, resources, and treatment. Equity means employees are valued based on their skills, knowledge, and abilities in a workplace, rather than their characteristics.

Equity involves going beyond the requirements of equality. Starting from a basis of ensuring equal opportunity and access as defined in 2.2, the principle of equity acknowledges that marginalisation is a debilitating condition to exist within and requires us to proactively accommodate the unique needs of individuals with protected characteristics.

Equity also relates to justice and proportional fairness.

2.2. Equality

- 2.2.1. Breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment and in the supply of services, the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.
- 2.2.2. Fundamental human rights (Human Rights Act 1998).
- 2.2.3. Principal of equal respect for the inherent dignity of people.
- 2.2.4. Not treating one person or group of people differently to another.
- 2.2.5. Children are born with fundamental freedoms and with the inherent rights of all human beings, but with specific additional needs because of their vulnerability (Convention on the Rights of the Child).

- 2.3. Diversity: Celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this, everyone can feel valued for their contribution. This is beneficial not only for the individual, but for the organisation as a whole.
- 2.4. Inclusion: valuing the diverse visible and non-visible differences that different people bring to their roles, resolution of problems and development of opportunities; recognising the potential of difference to improve the quality of decisions; where perspectives and differences are openly sought and generously shared, leading to better decisions; making

better provision for those who might be excluded or marginalised; understanding our own internal culture better and sharing our learning to be more inclusive.

- 2.5. Protected Characteristics: the nine protected characteristics identified within the 2010 Equality Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In Northern Ireland political opinion is also a protected characteristic.
- 2.6. Direct Discrimination: A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if, because of a protected characteristic, A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others.
- 2.7. Indirect discrimination: For example, it isn't enough to say 'everyone can access our services' if we aren't taking steps to understand the particular needs of specific minority groups when designing our services.
- 2.8. Person-centred approach: The EDI working group will, in consultation with the rest of the SF&G team, create a shared understanding and SF&G working definition for what we mean by this.
- 2.9. Staff: any full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, employees, potential employees, volunteers, contractors and trustees.

3. This Document

This document deals with our intentions towards and our responsibilities for equality, diversity and inclusion in its broadest sense in the internal culture and work of Social Farms & Gardens. The full document, which can be requested with any private details redacted, contains the following Appendices:

- Appendix A: History of development of this policy
- Appendix B: Current activities
- Appendix C: Any associated procedures and codes of conduct
- Appendix D: Any associated internal action plan/s
- Appendix E: Relevant reference materials used in the creation of this policy
- Appendix F: Organisations providing advice and support on discrimination

4. Implementation and scope

- 4.1. EDI crosses all areas of our work, internally and externally. Our internal culture and external activities should reflect, exemplify and actively illustrate our beliefs and commitments above. Staff are made aware of their rights and responsibilities to each other, our members and the

organisation regarding EDI issues. Managers have a key role in implementing this policy and are expected to take responsibility for ensuring its success.

- 4.2. EDI is critical to SF&G and we commit to a staff working group to monitor, report to Trustees and continually develop our internal work and external delivery in this area, supported by HR.
 - 4.2.1. The staff EDI working group will suggest goals and an action plan (appended) upon each annual review of this policy, which will identify areas for improvement, advice, adaptation, funding and compliance.
 - 4.2.1.1. The working group recognises that this work will take time and that at present we are working on our own internal culture.
 - 4.2.1.2. In the future, we aim that our external delivery is considered deeply.
 - 4.2.1.3. The goals and action plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees and ratified, along with the policy, annually or as necessary (e.g. change in law, policy or thinking).
 - 4.2.2. It is necessary to collect anonymised EDI data in an annual staff survey. This for SF&G to monitor progress and contribute to sector-wide reviews such as the Race Report.
- 4.3. The staff EDI working group commits to ensuring roll-out of our EDI commitments, developments and understanding across staff, visitors, members and beneficiaries.
- 4.4. If an employee is the subject or perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour whether direct or indirect, please refer to SF&G's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure. Any member or public complaints will be dealt with through SF&G's Complaints Procedure.
- 4.5. We also hold an Employment Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy applying to all aspects of employment. Please also refer to this policy.
- 4.6. SF&G reserve the right to amend and update this Policy at any time.

5. Responsibilities:

5.1. **Overall and Final Responsibility for this Policy:**

SF&G Trustees have ultimate accountability for ensuring appropriate Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies and procedures comply with relevant national legislation and with SF&G values and work.

The current Trustee(s) with responsibility is:

The current Chair, contactable via: sfgboard@farmgarden.org.uk

5.2. **SF&G Day-to-Day Responsibility for Ensuring Policy is Put Into Practice:**

The current HR Officer, contactable via: hradmin@farmgarden.org.uk

5.3. **The staff working group ensure Equity, Diversity and Inclusion standards are maintained and improved. The following people currently meet bi-weekly to adhere to this (name and contact details follow):**

Miriam Turley, Northern Ireland - miriam@farmgarden.org.uk

Karen Davidson, Scotland - karen@farmgarden.org.uk

Anne-Marie Pope, Wales - anne-marie@farmgarden.org.uk

Katie Trent, Wales – katie@farmgarden.org.uk

5.4. **Staff** are expected to respect and act in accordance with this policy. SF&G complaints and disciplinary policies and procedures are available and can be enacted where appropriate.

6. Review Date


Current Policy: Reviewed: Oct 2022 to May 2024; Oct 2024

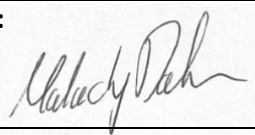
Reviewed by: The staff working group, as named in 5.3 above.

Approved by: Trustees in writing, at a meeting on Thursday 7 November 2024, signed by two members of the Board, as below

Next review date: The staff working group will continuously review and provide a reviewed policy for ratification, with amendments if appropriate and amended appendices, by the Board's November 2025 meeting.

APPROVED AND ACCEPTED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF Social Farms & Gardens Board of Trustees:

Signed: 	Date: Thursday 7 November 2024
Print name: Caroline Hutton	Role on Board: Co-chair

Signed: 	Date: Thursday 7 November 2024
Print name: Malachy Dolan	Role on Board: Co-chair