



## **1. Introduction**

Beltane Fire Society volunteers and staff come from a wide range of backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences and we believe that engaging with these will make our festivals as a whole more approachable and inclusive.

BFS wants to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for:

- Volunteers
- Members
- Contractors & staff
- Audience members (Witnesses)

We feel that diversity is at the core of BFS's values and that promoting equality and fairness, as well as actively discouraging discrimination is of high importance to the well-being of the society. We welcome our legal duties not to discriminate as a service provider and (should we become one in future), an employer.

We aim to go beyond the narrow scope of legislative compliance where possible, making equality, fairness and diversity a fundamental part of all our activities. This may be dependent on availability of resources.

### **1.1. Our Commitment to Equality & Diversity**

Beltane Fire Society will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of age, race, (including colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin) gender, gender identity or reassignment, disability, religion or belief, marital / partnership or family status, sexual orientation.

## **2. Scope**

This policy relates to all aspects of the work undertaken by Beltane Fire Society. This includes selecting contractors (and if relevant in future, employees), recruiting members, assigning roles, meeting clients' needs and dealing with volunteers, suppliers, supporters and other associated third parties.

## **3. Legal Obligations**

In valuing diversity, Beltane Fire Society aims, wherever resources allow, to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality. Current legislation and associated codes of practice are taken into account, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Work and Families Act 2006



- Civil partnership Act 2004 (as amended)
- The Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended)

#### **4. Meeting Witness's Needs**

Witnesses, in the case of Beltane Fire Society, may include but is not limited to those who attend Beltane Fire Festival and Samhuinn Fire Festival as members of the audience. The terms audience member or witness may be used interchangeably.

We are committed to treating all witnesses equally and fairly and to not discriminating unlawfully against them. We will also, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity. We will strive to ensure that witnesses:

- Are able to access the service in ways that suit them
- Are given help that is relevant to their situation or condition
- Are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination
- Have their needs listened to, and met whenever possible.

Beltane Fire Society is committed to meeting the diverse needs of clients. We will take steps to identify the needs of witnesses in our community and develop policies and procedures, setting out how we will meet witnesses' needs and for ensuring that the services we provide are accessible to all. In particular we will take into account the needs of witnesses with disabilities and/or mental health issues ). We will consider whether particular groups are predominant within our client base and devise appropriate policies / procedures to meet their needs.

#### **5. Employment (Paid Staff)**

As an organisation, Beltane Fire Society will treat all employees (should we have any in future), members, contractors, volunteers, role applicants and witnesses equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them.

We recognize the benefits of having a diverse workforce and audience and will take steps to ensure that employees (should we have any), no matter whether they are part-time, full-time, or temporary, will be recruited on the basis of their aptitude and ability. We will ensure that all employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Appraisals of performance will be conducted objectively and on time.

We will aim to create an environment in which employees feel they can raise any concerns about discrimination aimed at themselves or others. We will encourage an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

#### **6. Volunteers**

Volunteers contribute significantly to the diversity of the organization. They can expect to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination. They are likewise expected to treat



others fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination.

### **6.1. Challenging Discrimination**

It is the remit of all volunteers and members of the society to challenge discriminatory behaviour, bullying and harassment if they witness it within the society. We have a bullying and harassment procedure which sets out our stance and how we will deal with complaints of bullying and harassment, along with resolutions, grievance and disciplinary procedures, which may be used where cases of discrimination occur.

### **6.2. Accessibility**

Volunteers should be able to access all information and general meetings about / of the society. General meetings are those open to the whole society which deal with official society business.

- We will aim to choose a venue, for meetings which are open to all, that is deemed accessible and which is a reasonable distance from a bus route.
- We will keep a note of venues which have been found to be both good and bad with regards to the specific needs of members of our society and, where possible, will choose a known good venue for general meetings.
- We will communicate our notices in a number of ways - email, web, and social media to ensure that people have a wider range of options with regards to accessing them.

### **6.3. Volunteers / Members in Positions of Authority**

Volunteers who have authority over others in the organisations should have an understanding that they have further expectations upon them to promote equality and diversity as well as an attitude of respect and consideration for those whom they are guiding.

- Should challenge unacceptable or discriminatory behaviour when they see it and make it possible for others to stand up in such situations, knowing they will be supported.
- Treat their volunteer groups with dignity and respect.
- Demonstrate and promote fair and considerate behaviour.
- Should take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation or unlawful discrimination.

## **7. Implementing the policy**

### **7.1. Responsibilities**

At all levels of the organisation, trustees, those contracted to take on roles, any staff we may have in future, and members or volunteers are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.



## **7.2. Conduct and general standards of behaviour**

All BFS representatives including volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times.

Beltane Fire Society has a number of policies and procedures which lay out the behaviour expected of members of the society and those volunteering actively in a festival. These are available via our website and both members and volunteers will be asked to read, understand and agree to them as a condition of their membership or taking on a volunteer role.

Beltane Fire Society encourages volunteers and staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for those who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

## **7.3. Complaints of discrimination**

Beltane Fire Society will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any grounds made by employees, volunteers, clients or other third parties and will take action where appropriate. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation's resolution and grievance procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by staff, members, volunteers, witnesses and other third parties.

## **8. Review**

This policy will be reviewed not less than once a year or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance or problem or in the light of emerging legislation that could impact on this policy.

## **9. Grievance**

Details of the organisation's resolution, grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found at [beltane.org](http://beltane.org)

<b>THIS POLICY WAS FORMALLY APPROVED BY THE BFS BOARD ON:</b>	14 AUGUST 2017
<b>LAST REVIEWED:</b>	14 AUGUST 2017

