

# Equality and Diversity

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Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given equal access to opportunities and resources. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way. It is about treating everyone fairly and with respect, and it recognises that people from different backgrounds may have needs that are met in different ways.

Diversity is about valuing individual difference. Diversity challenges us to recognise and value all sorts of differences that exist when people work together in order to build stronger communities and harmonious environments for the benefit of all.

## Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 merged over 116 pieces of legislation, providing a legal framework with the aim of protecting the rights of the individual and advancing equality of opportunity.

Although it does not protect volunteers in the same way that it does employees, it does contain elements relating to service delivery that may apply to volunteers.

In terms of good practice, a volunteering-involving organisation should promote equality and diversity in volunteering. The organisation should have a statement of intent on equality and diversity that includes how it will recruit and select volunteers.

The policy should prohibit all discrimination on grounds of the following protected characteristics unless there is a specific reason for providing services to particular groups and it is lawful to limit service in this way under the organisation's constitution and equality law:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or civil partnership

## Further information

For more information about the Equality Act 2010 visit:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents).

Northumberland Community Voluntary Action (Northumberland CVA) has access to a wide range of resources to help you develop best practice in managing volunteers. For more information, advice and support email [enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk) or call 01670 858688.