

Equal Opportunities Policy: Hindu Samaj Northstowe (CIO)

Organization Name: Hindu Samaj Northstowe

Registered Charity No: 16936118

Effective Date: January 2026

Review Frequency: Annually

Diversity Champion: Mrs. Vindhya Desai

1. Policy Statement

Hindu Samaj Northstowe (HSN) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce and community, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We aim to create a hub where every individual—whether an employee, volunteer, contractor, or service user—feels respected and able to give their best.

Our commitment is to reinforce the **Equality Act 2010**, ensuring no one is discriminated against based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

2. "Beyond Compliance" & Community Inclusivity

At HSN, we believe in going **beyond compliance**. We do not merely meet legal minimums; we actively cultivate an environment of proactive belonging.

Our Commitment to Open Programming: All festivals, activities, and projects organized by HSN are inherently inclusive and open to every member of the community, including participants from the wider region. We communicate clearly that everyone is welcome, ensuring no individual or group is excluded. Shared spaces within the hub are managed with the utmost respect for all users. All celebrations are conducted with transparency and scheduled inclusively to respect the diverse needs of Northstowe residents.

We categorize our programming into two clear streams to ensure transparency:

- **Open Community Events:** Activities designed for universal participation.
- **Faith-Specific Observances:** Traditional rites which remain open for the community to observe or participate in where appropriate, fostering interfaith understanding.

3. Safeguarding and Inclusion for Children

Hindu Samaj Northstowe (HSN) believes every child has the right to participate in a safe, inclusive, and equal environment.

- **Universal Protection:** Our safeguarding and equality protocols apply to all children and young people participating in our activities, ensuring that no child is marginalized or excluded.
- **Appropriate Vetting:** We implement vetting procedures, including Enhanced DBS checks, for all volunteers and staff in "regulated activity" (those working directly and regularly with children) to ensure a safe environment.

- **Awareness & Guidance:** All volunteers are provided with clear guidance on our equality and safeguarding standards. This ensures that our commitment to inclusivity and safety is understood and practiced across all HSN projects and festivals.

4. Local Economic Impact and Recruitment

We are dedicated to the growth and vitality of the Northstowe and Cambridge area.

- **Local Hiring:** We prioritize hiring from the local community wherever possible to ensure the hub is truly "of the community."
- **Promoting Local Business:** Our events, such as the **Northstowe Holi Mela**, are specifically designed to promote local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- **Opportunities:** We provide a range of economical and volunteering opportunities to empower local residents and provide pathways to skills development.

5. Implementation and Governance

The responsibility for the successful implementation of this policy lies with our designated **Diversity Champion, Mrs. Vindhya Desai**.

- **Monitoring:** We will monitor the makeup of our workforce and service user base regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- **Annual Review:** This policy and its impact on the community will be reviewed annually to ensure HSN continues to meet the evolving needs of Northstowe.