

## Equality & Diversity Policy

### 1. Introduction

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the organisation is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all and protecting characteristics ie age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation. We will ensure a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity across all areas throughout the employment relationship from recruitment to termination and references.

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, the process will be conducted remotely. The organisation will ensure staff and their representatives have access to the necessary technology for participating. Staff rights will not be affected, and the organisation will ensure the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

A written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure will be made, either by the person holding the meeting or by a note taker.

This document forms part of a contract of employment and will be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted in advance of any proposed changes with those required by law being implemented with or without staff consent.

### 2. Policy Aims

- Ensure integration with equality and diversity practices into all the organisation does and ensure all staff are treated with fairness and respect from each other and from members of the public, committee members and contractors.
- To implement fair and just employment practices ensuring no job applicant or member of staff will receive less favourable treatment.
- Ensure people are recruited and staff promoted solely on the basis of their own merit, experience, ability and potential. This applies throughout the entire duration of employment as all decisions will be based on only relevant merits.
- Provide an environment which respects values and differences and promotes dignity, equality and diversity.

### 3. Responsibilities

This organisation will ensure all new staff and management committee members receive induction on this policy.

This policy applies to everyone in this organisation and everyone has a responsibility to be alert to discriminatory behaviours and practices. Should a situation arise, it will be dealt with immediately. Breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

#### **4. Recruitment & Selection**

It is this organisation's policy to ensure all recruitment decisions will be based completely on the merits and abilities of candidates and no other criteria will be used. In order to achieve this, equality and diversity practices will be integrated into every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

This will enable this organisation to recruit from the widest pool of talent, potentially raising the standard of intake and increasing the opportunity of a more diverse workforce. This will in turn, improve the organisation's service delivery, as it will include staff with more knowledge and experience, meet and aid in meeting the needs and aspirations of service users and potential service users.

To highlight the commitment to promoting equality and diversity from the beginning of the employment relationship, all vacancies will be aimed at as wide a group as possible. Adverts will also display any signs of equality bodies which this organisation is affiliated with. The information contained in the advert and all vacancy literature will be clear and accurate to attract the most appropriate candidates from all groups across society, to allow them to decide their own suitability for the vacancy and whether they wish to proceed with applying. This organisation will ensure all applications have clear instructions for completion and application forms will be free from personal questions which are not relevant to the vacancy and may lead to discrimination.

#### **5. Terms & Conditions of Employment**

As part of the employment relationship, all contracts of employment will be issued in accordance with the job role and not the job holder. No member of staff will receive less favourable terms and conditions for any reason other than relating specifically to the job role and the grade it attracts.

#### **6. Training and Development**

Equality and diversity will apply throughout all training activities and resources. Training and development opportunities will be given equally to all staff according to their job role. It is crucial all staff are able to participate and enjoy any training opportunities or activities without discrimination or fear of harassment.

#### **7. Sexual Harassment**

The organisation will take all reasonably practical steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace through training and educating staff and volunteers on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The organisation will protect staff and volunteers from being subjected to any inappropriate or lewd behaviour by colleagues and third parties including contractors, visitors and service users. Anyone who is subject to such harassment should inform their line manager or another appropriate manager as soon as possible who will treat the matter seriously and confidentially and will carry out a fair and full investigation. Staff subjected to any such behaviours will be offered support such as counselling and temporary or permanent alterations to their working arrangements.

## **8. Redundancy Selection**

Redundancy selection will be made according to the statutory requirements and in line with this organisations Redundancy Policy. Criteria will be discussed with the Trade Union and or nominated representatives. The criteria will be set out and will be objectively fair and consistent.

## **9. Complaints:-Staff**

Where staff feel they have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed by any colleague (including managers), the aim should be to deal with it informally in the first instance.

### **Informal Stage**

It may be the discriminatory action was unconscious and easily resolved once the situation is highlighted. This is often the most efficient way with dealing with such circumstances and helps maintain good working relations.

The member of staff should raise the issue informally with their line manager (if the complaint is against their manager then the manager next in line). The manager will speak to the person whom the complaint is against. If it is found the behaviour was in breach of this policy, an appropriate level of sanction will be decided in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

A file note of the incident will be kept on the complainant's file, including a statement, the note will only be taken into account if there are any further incidents.

Dealing with the matter informally does not remove the complaining staff member's right to have the matter dealt with formally.

### **Formal Stage**

If the member of staff is dissatisfied with the informal stage outcome or the complaint is serious, they should raise the matter in writing to their line manager. The complaint will then be dealt with under the Grievance Policy. In line with this process an investigation into the complaint will be carried out.

If the outcome of the investigation is that a formal disciplinary hearing should take place, this will be conducted in line with the Disciplinary Procedures. (Please refer to the Disciplinary Policy for full details).

### **Stakeholders**

The right to be treated equally with dignity and respect extends to outside contractors, partners, service users, customers and any other agencies which are associated with this organisation. Stakeholders have a right to have any issues addressed under this policy. Any complaints will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

If a stakeholder feels they are being discriminated against in the course of their working day, the following procedure should be followed.

### **Informal Stage**

Where possible, incidents should be dealt with informally. The stakeholder should report the matter to their lead contact within this organisation as soon as possible. It may be the discriminatory action is unconscious and easily resolved once the situation is highlighted.

The manager will discuss the situation with the individual whom the complaint is against and explain the expected standards of behaviour and the consequences of failing to comply with these. It will be made clear to the individual continuation of such conduct may result in being subject to disciplinary action.

### **Formal Stage**

Where informal action is not appropriate or the matter is of a serious nature the complaint will be dealt with using the formal procedure. A thorough investigation will take place in the first instance. If it is found an individual has acted inappropriately, they will be advised in writing by the relevant senior manager stating their comments, actions, behaviours are not acceptable and potentially discriminatory.

The letter will advise any further incidents will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action. In cases of physical violence or serious threats the appropriate manager will notify the police.

## **10. Data Protection Act 2018**

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.