



growing points

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Purpose and scope

Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything that we do. This policy aims to communicate our commitment to all customers, volunteers, stakeholders and everyone we work with to ensure everyone who comes into contact with our charity is treated fairly and free from all forms of discrimination.

The policy applies to all those who work for us as volunteers and trustees who are expected to work to the highest ethical standards, live our values and put this policy into practice.

A copy of this policy will be distributed to everyone who works with and for us as volunteers and trustees, and will be made available on our website.

Any questions about the policy should be directed to the Director.

This policy does not form part of any contract, but demonstrates how we wish to conduct ourselves.

Policy statement

The Charity is fully committed to providing inclusive services to all our customers, and volunteers, irrespective of their “the protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality), religion or belief, sexual orientation, or income. We aim to create services and experiences that are free from discrimination or harassment in any form, ensuring everyone we encounter is treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

We are committed to actively promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that we do. The Charity will not unlawfully discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment and selection, or in the opportunities afforded for volunteering, training or any other benefit. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively.

Specific Responsibilities

The Charity has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation and for observing relevant Codes of Practice.

The **Director** is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and for ensuring that all policies, procedures and practices adhere to this policy.

All trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Any concerns relating to discrimination, or lack of inclusion or fairness should be reported to the Director (or a Trustee if the Director is involved).

The Director is responsible for implementing the Policy and must apply the policy as part of their day-to-day management of the Charity.

Forms of discrimination

The following are forms of discrimination that this policy aims to avoid:

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. Direct discrimination can also occur by way of association, which is when a person is treated less favourably because, for example, their spouse or partner or other relative has the protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in that way has the right to complain.

To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate business reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.

Victimisation occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because he/she has raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action, in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination, against the Charity or because he/she has supported someone else in doing this.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable.

Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period of time and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they nonetheless find unpleasant.

Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to a protected characteristic it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.

Discrimination arising from Disability - In addition to the above, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified.

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

There are a number of ways in which the Charity aims to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion including:

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection procedures for Trustees and volunteers will be free from bias or discrimination. All procedures will be conducted objectively and will be based upon specific and reasonable role-related criteria. Decisions regarding an individual's suitability for a particular role will be based on aptitude and ability.

We will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that disabled applicants are not substantially disadvantaged.

Development and training

All Trustees and volunteers will be encouraged to develop their full potential.

All Trustees and volunteers will be given an appropriate induction to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role.

Terms and conditions

Our terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly and any benefits and facilities will be made available to Trustees and volunteers, as appropriate.

Policies and practices

The Charity aims to ensure that all our policies and practices, including any rules or requirements, do not directly or indirectly discriminate and are applied in a non-discriminatory manner. The Charity will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the environment or any services delivery arrangements that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage these cause disabled volunteers or clients.

We will aim as far as reasonably practicable to accommodate the requirements of our volunteers and clients regardless of their protected characteristics.

Environment

All individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and the Charity takes reasonable steps to protect volunteers from discrimination, bullying or harassment and, in the event of a complaint, we will take appropriate action to prevent, as far as possible, a further occurrence.

All volunteers and clients are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour that occurs during the course of their direct involvement with the Charity or any of its volunteers.

Monitoring

The Charity will monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.

Information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and will not be used for any other purpose.

Raising a complaint of discrimination

The Director will take all complaints of discrimination very seriously and investigate them reporting the outcome to the Trustees. Where this complaint relates to the Director, the complaint will be referred to the Chair of Trustees.

Any volunteer who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, or breached this policy in any other way, will be subject to appropriate formal action that may, depending on the circumstances, involve terminating any contract or agreement.

The Charity will also take seriously any malicious or, in its opinion, unwarranted allegations of discrimination and will take appropriate action where necessary.

Review

The policy will be reviewed every two years, or more often if required.

Next Review Date: March 2021