

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### 1. Introduction

Equality and diversity is an integral part of all of the policies and practices of the **wish centre**. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other the **wish centre** policies, procedures and mandatory documents.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, service users and visitors, also to all engagements with funding bodies, partner organisations, sub-contractors and suppliers.

The **wish centre** believes in extending opportunity and equality of opportunity to all areas where an individual or group of individuals is disadvantaged by virtue of their appearance, status or background.

This policy also forms part of the terms and conditions of employment for staff.

### 2. Equality and diversity at the wish centre

The aim of this policy is to ensure fair and equal treatment for all involved with the **wish centre** and recognise and remove any unfair barriers to equality of opportunity in our resources, service provision and employment.

The **wish centre** believes that the promotion of equal opportunities is synonymous with the development of good practice and contributes to the service it is providing to its diverse community.

We therefore do not only recognise the different equality strands covered by legislation but are also opposed to all unlawful and unfair discrimination (direct or indirect). The areas currently recognised in the law are:

- Age
- Conviction history
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Family and caring responsibilities
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin
- Religion, religious belief or non-belief, or other beliefs

(See Equality and Diversity Policy appendix I. for an overview of the legislation)

### 3. Policy into practice

The **wish centre** will meet the aims of this policy by ensuring that equality and good diversity practice is mainstreamed through all that we do. The following areas will have specific consideration.

- 3.1 The **wish centre** will ensure that all members of staff have equal access to opportunities within the organisation in terms of recruitment, training and promotion. The **wish centre** aims to create a culture in which all staff are treated with dignity and respect. Everyone at the **wish centre** is responsible for maintaining an environment free of harassment, bullying, discrimination and victimisation, both internal and external to the organisation in line with the Bullying and Harrassment Policy. Individuals are encouraged to:
- be aware of the potential impact of their behaviour and language on others.
  - challenge and/or report behaviour which is considered to be unacceptable.
- 3.2 The **wish centre** will expect its own employees, volunteers and those employed by sub-contractors to champion young people where there is discrimination and to challenge inappropriate behaviour or stereotyping. Young people will be supported in making informed choices with the promotion of equal opportunity in all the **wish centre** activity.
- 3.3 The **wish centre** will ensure that all services delivered by sub-contractors on its behalf are accessible to all clients. Young people will be consulted on equal opportunities issues in line with the Young Peoples Charter.
- 3.4 The **wish centre** is not covered by the purposes of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, although it is recognised that the organisation delivers functions that are covered by the Act. Therefore, the **wish centre** will work within the parameters of the Act and guidance on compliance.

## 4. Implementation

### 4.1 Responsibilities

#### 4.1.1 Responsibilities of all

Under this policy it is the responsibility of all Trustees, managers, staff and volunteers to:

- read this policy, meet the expectations contained within and seek clarification for anything that is unclear.
- attend appropriate equality and diversity training provided by the **wish centre**.
- set a positive example in the treatment of others.
- challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as breaching this policy.
- be pro-active in ensuring this policy is adhered to in their decision making and through the active challenge of policies and practices that do not adhere to the spirit or letter of this policy.
- promote an environment in which individuals from all backgrounds feel welcome, valued and respected.
- promote equality and diversity in the delivery of the **wish centre** services and in everything that we do.

#### 4.1.2 Responsibilities of Managers

As well as the responsibilities for all (above) it is the responsibility of all the **wish centre** managers to:

- be a role model.
- encourage a culture where staff and others feel able to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

- promote and implement the principles of this policy through all service provision, policy and practice.
- support and implement action to improve equality and diversity in the **wish centre**.
- ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.
- ensure that appropriate action is taken where there has been a breach of this policy.
- support and direct those who may have experienced discrimination, harassment or bullying to additional support as appropriate.

In addition to all of the above, the Centre Director will:

- oversee the development and operation of this policy.
- update the organisation on any changes affecting the policy.
- ensure that the policy and its related procedures, mechanisms and agreed action plans are implemented effectively.
- ensure that the organisation is adhering to good practice.
- ensure the appropriate monitoring is carried out as directed by the Board of Trustees.
- ensure that any concern, grievance or complaint is dealt with promptly, sensitively and confidentially.

#### 4.1.3 Responsibilities of Trustees

As well as the responsibilities for all (above) it is the responsibility of all **wish centre** Trustees to:

- ensure clear leadership in the promotion of equality and diversity.
- ensure that the **wish centre** adheres to equality legislation and good practice.
- ensure that equality and diversity is embedded into strategic planning.
- ensure this policy and any related action plans, procedures, strategies and arrangements are implemented, with the assistance of the Centre Director.
- ensure the policy is reviewed as stated.
- regularly consider monitoring data and any action plans which arise from it.

4.2 To assist in the implementation of this policy the **wish centre** will introduce supporting guidance on: harassment and bullying, employment, employing people with disabilities and service delivery.

## 5. Communication and review

### 5.1 Communication

A copy of this policy statement and supporting guidance will be given to all employees, volunteers and sub-contractors, and other reasonable steps will be taken to publicise and explain the content and spirit of this policy to clients and the wider community.

### 5.2 Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the **wish centre** and all who receive the **wish centre** services and support.

The policy will be updated according to legislative changes as and when needed.

## Appendix I: Overview of the legislation

This policy is developed in the light of current legislation and codes of practice, including

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975, 1986 Amendment, Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 and Gender Equality Duty 2007
- The Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005 and the Disability Equality Duty 2006
- Prevention from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998
- Employment Regulations Act 1999, Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004
- Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010

## Appendix II: Definitions of key terms

Below are definitions of some of the key words and phrases most commonly used in equality and diversity discussions and documentation.

### Bullying (based on ACAS definition)

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient.

### Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination is when someone is treated less favourably in employment, vocational training or service provision because of one of the characteristics covered under the legislation. This is usually clearly stated or known action.

### Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

The EHRC promotes equality and human rights in Britain through advice and guidance to individuals, organisations and government bodies. <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

### Genuine Occupational Requirement (from October 2010: Occupational Requirement)

This exception applies where being of a particular sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age, or not being a transsexual person, married or a civil partner is a requirement

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for the job. The requirement must be crucial to the post and the person seeking to rely on it must be able to show that it pursues a legitimate aim.

#### Harassment (definition from ACAS)

"Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient."

#### Indirect Discrimination

Occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to all groups of people but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.

In some circumstances, indirect discrimination may be justifiable but only if it is considered to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### Positive action

Is offering help/encouragement to people who are underrepresented in order that they may take full and equal advantage of opportunities in jobs, education, training, services, etc.

#### Social Model of Disability

The **wish centre** accepts the social model of disability. We accept that it is society (individuals and organisations) that has erected barriers to jobs, services, education and training. The **wish centre** will endeavour to remove barriers as and when they are recognised and consult appropriately to ensure as wide as possible access for all.

#### Victimisation

Treating someone less favourably than other people because they have made a claim or allegation of discrimination or harassment, reported discrimination or harassment or supported someone else to make such a claim/allegation.