

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

This policy is intended to ensure that employees understand their obligations and assist the Charity in putting its commitment to equal opportunities and diversity into practice.

### Our Aim

We aim to treat everyone equally and to ensure that no job applicant, employee, worker or family is discriminated against on the grounds of a protected characteristic, part time status or trade union activities. The following are protected characteristics:

- a) Age.
- b) Disability.
- c) Gender reassignment.
- d) Marriage and civil partnership.
- e) Pregnancy and maternity.
- f) Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin).
- g) Religion or belief.
- h) Sex.
- i) Sexual orientation.

This applies in the advertisement of jobs, recruitment, appointment, provision of benefits, allocation of training, promotion, disciplinary proceedings, dismissal, conditions of work, pay, giving a reference, the provision of goods or services and every other activity and aspect of employment.

### Our Commitment

We are committed to providing equal opportunities to our employees, workers and families, and to encouraging diversity in the workplace.

We do not tolerate any unlawful or unfair discrimination and anyone found to be acting in a discriminatory manner will face disciplinary action which could include dismissal. Everyone has a duty to report unlawful or unfair discriminatory behaviour to a member of management. We actively promote equality of opportunity and require everyone to contribute towards achieving this objective.

We believe that treating people with dignity and respect is an important part of realising equal opportunities and diversity, and this policy should be read in conjunction with our harassment and bullying policy.

### Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The different types of discrimination are generally defined as follows:

- a) Direct discrimination: where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.
- b) Indirect discrimination: where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is to the detriment of people who share a protected characteristic when compared with people who do not, and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- c) Harassment: where there is unwanted conduct in relation to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, regardless of the intention of the perpetrator.
- d) Associative discrimination: where a person is directly discriminated against because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- e) Perceptive discrimination: where a person is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have protected characteristic even though they do not.
- f) Victimisation: where a person is subjected to a detriment because they have supported or raised a complaint under the Equality Act 2010 or are suspected of doing so.

## Recruitment and Selection

Our objective is to recruit staff best able and qualified to perform the required or anticipated tasks. We will recruit using a variety of methods, for example, online Job Boards, Social Media, advertisements in local newspapers, Job Centres and elsewhere.

The wording of any advertisements will not place unfair restrictions or requirements on a particular group or request specific qualifications that are not necessary for the effective performance of the job. All applications will be considered on the basis of objective criteria, such as qualifications, experience and ability to do the job.

Person specifications and job descriptions will only state requirements as necessary where they are essential for the job. Account will be taken of reasonable adjustments that may be required for disabled applicants.

The selection processes used will measure the suitability of the applicant in terms of the requirements for the position. Selection criteria and procedures will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are selected and promoted on the basis of relevant merits and abilities.

We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees who are making selection and recruitment decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or subconsciously, in making these decisions.

## Training and Promotion

All employees will be given equality of opportunity and will be encouraged to progress within the Charity.

We are committed to maintaining high standards of training and personal development strictly in the context of this policy on equal opportunities. Training will not be refused on an unlawful basis.

Any decisions concerning promotion and advancement will be made on merit and will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Understanding Inclusion training will be provided to all new employees as part of the induction process. Written instructions and training will be given to managers from time to time on equality and diversity in recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal.

## Discipline and Dismissal

We aim to ensure there is no discrimination in our disciplinary or redundancy processes and will examine procedures and criteria to ensure that discrimination is not taking place. The Charity will regularly monitor the decisions being made.

## Suppliers and Families

We will not discriminate against people supplying, using or seeking to use the goods, facilities and services we provide.

## Scope of this Policy

You are required to assist the Charity in meeting its commitment under this policy and to avoid unlawful discrimination. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action, and serious acts of discrimination will lead to dismissal without notice for gross misconduct. Serious acts of harassment might also be considered to be a criminal offence.

If you feel or consider that you have been treated less favourably or placed at a disadvantage on the basis of the above, please inform your Line Manager or, if the complaint relates to your Line Manager, to their line manager, so that the issue can be investigated and resolved.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. Individuals not involved in the complaint or the investigation should not be told about it. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint. The investigation should be thorough, impartial and objective, and carried out with sensitivity and due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.

We will arrange a meeting with you, usually within one week of receiving your complaint, so that you can give your account of events. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative of your choice, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation. You will be given a provisional timetable for the investigation. The investigator will arrange further meetings with you as appropriate throughout the investigation.

We will take any complaint made under this policy seriously, and assure you that you will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if your complaint is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

If you have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act please let your Line Manager know so that reasonable adjustments can be considered.

## Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.