

Heart of the Community Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This policy applies to all trustees, volunteers, members of our community, participants in courses, workshops and other activities. When working in collaboration with other organisations must also observe the standards of behaviour set out in this policy.

Heart of the Community Trustees reserve the rights to amend, modify and update the terms of this policy at any time.

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1. What does this policy cover?

Our commitment to valuing everyone means that equality, diversity and inclusion are fully embedded.

We are committed to treating everyone equally and promoting a supportive culture of equality, diversity and inclusion for all our service users and business partners.

This policy sets out in detail exactly what we mean by that, the steps we take to achieve it, what you can expect from us, what we expect in return and how to raise an issue if you need to.

2. When does this policy apply?

Equality, diversity and inclusion encompass much more than just regulation and legislation. Our approach aims to drive a culture of inclusion, so we want to embed the principles outlined in this policy through all our activities.

To help achieve this, you also have a responsibility to treat others with respect and dignity. Language, behaviour and actions that are not in keeping with this policy will not be tolerated. If you are found to have acted in a discriminatory manner, we reserve the right to cease working with you.

3. What is our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion?

An understanding of what we mean by equality, diversity and inclusion is key to supporting our trustees and volunteers to create an environment which supports our ambitions.

Equality is about fair and equal access to our workshops and other activities.

Diversity is about recognising the similarities and differences across people and communities, reflecting that in the way we recruit Heart of the Community trustees and volunteers and in how we attract and form valuable relationships with our service users.

Inclusion is about creating the right environment for our trustees and volunteers to work together to deliver excellence for our service users and support, respect and value each other.

Therefore, all those involved with Heart of the Community, in whatever capacity, can expect to:

- have your individual needs and aspirations recognised and met where this is possible
- be treated fairly
- be fairly recognised for your personal contribution
- be supported in balancing Heart of the Community requirements with work and home life commitments
- be treated with dignity and respect in a fair and consistent manner in an environment where behaviour is inclusive and inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable

4. Types of discrimination

Essential to our equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions is our commitment to the elimination of unlawful discrimination, and we aim to ensure that discrimination does not arise in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Discrimination can take the following forms:

Direct discrimination – Treating someone less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination – Where a practice, policy or decision, whether intended to treat anyone less favourably or not, puts a particular group of people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.

Victimisation – Treating someone badly because they have, in good faith, complained about discrimination or harassment or because they have helped someone who has been discriminated against.

Harassment – any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassing or bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments - A reasonable adjustment is where positive steps are taken to help a disabled person overcome a disadvantage.

Associative discrimination – Harassing someone or treating them less favourably because of their association with someone with a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception – Harassing someone or treating them less favourably because of a mistaken belief that they have a protected characteristic.

5. How do we ensure this policy is effective?

We seek to embed equality, diversity and inclusion across all our activities. We have in place a governance structure to support the application of this policy and ensure it is effective:

The structure is led by the Trustees and supported by the Heart of the Community Committee. The Committee generally meets quarterly and oversees all activities relating to the ED&I agenda.

6. What should you do if you feel discrimination has occurred?

We all have a responsibility to promote and advance this policy by behaving in a way that is consistent with our aims and by challenging and reporting unacceptable behaviour.

If, as a Trustee, volunteer or service user, you feel you have been treated unfairly, or that discrimination, harassment or victimisation has occurred or that you have witnessed discrimination against others, then we would urge you to raise this with one of our Trustees. We aim to support you and to take action to resolve the situation, either informally where this is appropriate, or we may advise you to raise a formal grievance. If your grievance is not dealt with to your satisfaction by 1 trustee, you should request that 2 other Trustees be informed to review the matter.

