

Equal Opportunities Policy and procedure

Aim

Ensuring that Trustees, Management, Staff, Volunteers and Service users are made aware, understand, agree with, and are willing to implement, this policy. All staff will be given a copy of this policy as part of their induction.

1. Statement of policy

The Association of Carers recognises that we live in a society where discrimination still operates to the disadvantage of many groups in society and the Charity is committed to the principle that no employee, job applicant, volunteer or Service user, shall receive unfavourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or civil partnership, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual orientation or for any other reason that can be objectively justified.

In the provision of services and the employment of staff, the charity is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone. Throughout its activities, The Association of Carers will treat all people equally whether they are:

- Seeking or using our services.
- Applying for a job or already employed by us.
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements.
- Volunteers.

Our aim is that our workforce, volunteers and service users, will be truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee and volunteer feels respected and able to give of their best.

The Charity welcomes the statutory requirements laid down in:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- Human Rights Act Nov 1998;
- The Work and Families Act 2006.
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).
- Equality Act 2010

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2. Reasons for the policy

The Charity wishes to employ the most suitable and appropriately qualified people for the work to be undertaken. Consequently, sound business reasons support the promotion by the Charity of equal opportunities in employment. Over a period of time, legislation has been introduced to encourage equal opportunities and to render discrimination unlawful. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has been established to work towards the elimination of discriminatory practices, and has devised codes of practice which contain practical advice on ways to avoid discrimination and on the management of an equal opportunities policy.

3. Equality of treatment

The policy aims to ensure that members of staff adhere to the principle of equality of treatment. It prohibits acts of discrimination whereby one individual is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of any one of the above range of protected characteristics.

Examples of such discrimination by an employer include:

- Deliberately refusing or omitting to make an offer of employment
- Restricting or denying access to promotion, transfer, training, or other benefits or facilities
- Dismissing an individual
- Subjecting an individual to some other detriment (for example, racial or sexual harassment)
- Discriminating in the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job.

The *Equality Act 2010* identifies a number of different types of discrimination. These are:

Direct discrimination – where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

Associative discrimination – this is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

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Discrimination by perception – this is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.

Indirect discrimination – this can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.

Harassment – this is behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can now complain of the behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

Harassment by a third party – employers are potentially liable for the harassment of their staff or customers by people they don't themselves employ, i.e. a contractor.

Victimisation – this occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.

A manager or employee who contravenes (or knowingly aids another person to contravene) the Charity's policy may be held personally liable for committing an act of lawful discrimination and may, together with the Charity, be subject to legal proceedings.

4. Responsibilities

The management official with overall responsibility for the application of the equal opportunities policy is:

Sue Palmer -Director of Charity

Each line manager is responsible for communicating the policy to all employees, providing operational procedures and training, and monitoring the application of the policy.

Managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that they and all staff under their control understand the policy and observe the correct procedures.
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

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All employees have an important part to play in the application of the policy, such that their attitudes and actions are consistent at all times with both the spirit and the letter of the policy.

5. Recruitment, selection and promotion

The Charity's intention in respect of recruitment, selection and promotion is to appoint the most able candidate for each job.

The charity uses open recruitment methods to assist in our implementation via local and national press advertisements, local careers centres and job centres.

In order to ensure that this intention is realised, the requirements of each job are identified and all candidates assessed against the same criteria at each stage of the selection process, to ensure that fairness and consistency are achieved throughout. Similarly, all candidates for promotion possessing appropriate skills, knowledge and experience are given the same degree of consideration. Employee appraisals are concerned only with the assessment of actual performance in the job.

6. Training

Educational and vocational courses leading to relevant qualifications are available to all employees equally.

Training in matters relating, directly or indirectly, to equal opportunities is regarded as a vital component in the training programmes for managers and supervisors, both as a means to maintaining the level of awareness of the policy and of ensuring that the policy is operating as the Charity intends.

7. Conditions of employment and provision of benefits and services

All conditions of employment, employee benefits and services apply to all employees equally.

Accommodation and facilities are provided, as far as it is practicable to do so, having proper regard for the needs of the disabled.

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8. Observing the policy

The overall aim of the policy is to promote a harmonious working environment for all members of staff. Therefore, the appropriate supervisor or manager should be informed if an occasion arises, or is suspected to have arisen, where an individual experiences unfavourable treatment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. Any employee who feels he or she is unable to discuss the matter with his or her supervisor or manager may contact the Chair of Trustees

A member of staff or volunteer with a grievance concerning the application of this policy should follow the grievance procedure.

It is a disciplinary offence to discriminate intentionally against a fellow employee, volunteer, or job applicant in contravention of the policy.

9. Monitoring

The Charity will monitor and continuously review the operation of the policy and expects all employees and volunteers to co-operate by providing relevant information, where necessary. All such information will be treated as strictly confidential and used solely for this purpose.

The monitoring system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

10. Harassment

Harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic is a form of discrimination. It is unlawful behaviour and in direct contravention of the Charity's equal opportunity policy.

Harassment is unwanted conduct on the grounds of a protected characteristics, which is either personally offensive or a failure to respect the rights of others. It includes making gestures, comments or 'jokes', the display of offensive material and physical contact or assault.

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Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to eliminate any harassment or intimidation of which they are aware.

An employee who believes that he or she is, or has been the subject of harassment should initially raise the matter with his or her immediate supervisor.

Either


If an employee believes they have been harassed they should raise a complaint under the Charity's harassment procedure

Or

Formal investigations of complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Charity's grievance and disciplinary procedures, and will be handled sensitively and confidentially, with due respect for the rights of those concerned.

If the outcome of the investigation reveals that a complaint is justified, appropriate action, including disciplinary action, will be taken. Retaliation or victimisation of an employee who has complained about harassment will also be treated as a disciplinary offence.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

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| Reviewed | March 2016 | | | | | |
| Signature |  | | | | | |