Kirkby Lonsdale Community Cupboard CIO

Registered Charity Number 1207199

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

1. Our commitment

Our Equality and Diversity Policy sets out our commitment to creating an inclusive environment for everyone who works within, volunteers for, and accesses the initiatives run by Kirkby Lonsdale Community Cupboard CIO. We are committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our trustees, committee/s, wider workforce (employed and/or self employed), volunteers and those that access our services, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Recognising, embracing and valuing difference leads to improvements for all, including: a more vibrant staff and volunteer population, a better working and volunteering environment, and the ability to attract and retain the very best people to support our community and the work we do.

Whilst we are fully committed to compliance with all relevant equality legislation, (including the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and best practice guidance), this policy builds on the statutory position to ensure effective policies and practice that promote equality and inclusion.

2. Principles

• We seek to promote and encourage a culture in which everyone is treated with respect, valued and rewarded for what they contribute, with zero tolerance of unfair discrimination at every level.

• We will ensure that all of our people who work or volunteer with us, as well as those who apply to work or volunteer with us, are treated fairly and are not discriminated against on any grounds, including those protected by the Equality Act 2010.

• We will always take any discrimination/sexual harassment complaints seriously, respond sensitively and quickly and, if proven, ensure that the action taken is prompt and effective.

• In seeking to achieve a diverse work and volunteer force at all levels, we will ensure that no employee or volunteer, job applicant or candidate for promotion will be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements that are not related to the job/volunteering role.

• Recruitment is openly advertised, using communication channels and language that will both reach and engage under-represented groups.

• Our volunteer recruitment uses messaging and advertising methods appropriate to our target audience, including under-represented groups.

• We will not tolerate any behaviour from any of our people which breaches our Equality and Diversity Policy.

• Serious offences such as discrimination on protected grounds – serious offences including harassment, bullying, or victimisation will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action including dismissal from employment or volunteering service without notice.

• Every business case for change is subject to an equality review with the intention of identifying any positive, negative or neutral impact the proposal may have on people with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).

This includes employees who will be subject to the proposed changes or affected by them, service users, volunteers and/or supporters as applicable.

3. How we will do this

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of:

- age
- caring responsibilities
- disability
- economic hardship / poverty
- gender reassignment / gender identity
- marriage or civil partnership status
- pregnancy or maternity
- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

We will pro-actively tackle discrimination or disadvantage, and aim to ensure that no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated against for any reason regarding employment, volunteering or accessing our services.

If you ever feel you have been treated in a way that is contrary to this policy, our Dignity at Work Policy provides you with a simple process to follow to address your concerns and reach a resolution.

We will ensure we do not discriminate against you on any of the above grounds when we recruit you (job applicants, staff and volunteers), when we promote internally, when we allocate training, when we appraise you, when we choose selection criteria for redundancy or when we make any other decisions about your employment with us.

We will

- ensure that all staff, volunteers and committee members are aware of the duty on them to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and to never discriminate against or harass anyone associated with the KLCC CIO in any capacity

• take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

We all have a personal responsibility to:

• read and understand this policy and act in a manner that is consistent with our values and behaviours at all times

• report any instances of behaviour that is contrary to this policy or the Dignity at Work Policy to our coordinator or another manager you feel comfortable with

• understand there could be legal implications personally (as well as for the KLCC CIO), and that we could be held criminally liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination against anyone associated with the KLCC CIO

• understand that our responsibility extends to social events and contact with colleagues outside of the workplace if they are considered to fall within the course of employment, volunteering or other connection to the KLCC CIO.

4. Who this policy is applicable to

This policy is applicable to all employees, agency staff, sessional/ casual workers, contractors, volunteers, job applicants, trustees and committee members.

5. Definitions

Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation. Equality is about valuing a person 'as an equal' and treating people according to their needs and characteristics to achieve an equal or fair outcome – it's not necessarily about treating everyone the same.

Diversity is defined as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for the wider organisation.

Direct discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

Discrimination by association is a type of direct discrimination. It occurs where a person is treated less favourably because they associate with someone who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception discrimination is also a form of direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. If you discriminate against people because you think they are transgender or LGBTQ, for example, then they will be protected even if they do not have these protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination occurs where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to all groups of people but puts a particular group sharing a protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared with other people. For example, a requirement to work full time may put women at a disadvantage because they generally have more childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would need to be objectively justified.

Harassment can be described as unwanted behaviour, including for example, emails, remarks or gestures, which are intended or have the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. This can be related to gender, sexuality, race, religion or other “protected characteristics” and it includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment may be both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in the case of allegations of sexual assault. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Victimisation broadly refers to derogatory treatment directed towards someone who has made or is believed to have made or supported a colleague’s complaint under the Equality Act. It can also include situations where a complaint hasn't yet been made but someone is victimised or treated unfairly because it's suspected they might make one.

6. Monitoring

We monitor the diversity of our workforce measuring and reviewing information such as age, disability, ethnic background, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the policy is working in practice by reviewing any complaints brought under the Dignity at Work Policy.

7. Breaches of this policy

Whilst the aim of the policy is prevention, if you believe you have been the subject of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, you are encouraged to report it. To do this you should use the procedure detailed in the Dignity at Work Policy. Any such proven breaches of policy will be regarded as misconduct, except for serious offences such as discrimination on protected characteristic grounds – serious offences including harassment, bullying, or victimisation which will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal from your employment or volunteering without notice.

8. Exceptions to this policy

Discrimination by or against a member of staff, agency staff, contractors, sessional/casual workers, volunteers, job applicants and trustees is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. There are certain circumstances when organisations might be within their legal rights to treat an individual less favourably and where these instances will not be counted as discrimination. For example, a refuge for Indian women who are victims of domestic violence. In this case, we might be justified in wanting to employ only Indian women workers on the grounds that the female victims in the refuge would find it less difficult to communicate with and relate to workers of the same racial group. For advice about whether such exceptions are applicable, you should contact your volunteer manager, supervisor or coordinator.

9. Further information and related policies

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Volunteer/Employee Issue Resolution Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Volunteer/Employee Issue Resolution Policy

• ACAS https://www.acas.org.uk/advice

• Equality and Human Rights Commission
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/core-guidance-voluntary-charity-and-community-organisations