

# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1. Policy Control

Version	Description	Date
1.0	Agreed by Trustees	10/2015
1.1	Reviewed by Board	14/2/2017
	For Review	02/2019
Reviewed by Sharon Gregory, HR Dept. 03/2021 & 02/2022		
2.0	Reviewed	03/2022
2.0	Approved	21/04/2022
	For Review	02/2023

## 2. Statement of intent

Communities First Wessex (CFW) known as Community First recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status and civil partnership, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

We will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in our own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

We aim to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences. We see these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve.

All employees, workers, volunteers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotions, training, or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability.

The organisation is committed to providing a working environment in which employees are able to realise their full potential and to contribute to business

success irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This is a key employment value to which all employees' volunteers and member organisations are expected to give their support.

Furthermore, the organisation does not discriminate directly or indirectly in the provision of services to clients and will make whatever reasonable adjustments are necessary to overcome barriers to using its services caused by disability.

In order to create conditions in which this goal can be realised the organisation is committed to identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes.

All volunteers, employees, committee members and member organisations must declare their support for the objectives of this Equality and Diversity policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action or ineligibility for membership.

### 3. What is discrimination?

Community First believes that discrimination can take one or more of the forms set out below. The law also recognises and defines these categories as follows:

- Direct discrimination is treating one person less favourably than another in the same or similar circumstances or segregating them from others solely because they are, for example, a lesbian, a gay man or because they have a disability or illness. Refusing to employ someone who has the required skills because they are deaf or because they are pregnant would constitute such discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination occurs where there is a requirement or condition which applies equally to everyone but which, in practice, has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified. For example an unnecessary physical or age requirement can discriminate against women or disabled people. The setting of language tests, where language skills or fluency are not really needed for a job, is another example.
- Associative Discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive Discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated or harassed based on a perception that he or she has a particular protected characteristic when he or she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.
- Discrimination arising from disability occurs where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of the person's disability and which cannot be objectively justified. In this case, there is no need to compare a disabled person's treatment with that of another person. However, there can be no discrimination if the organisation did not know, or could not have reasonably expected to know about the person's disability. It is therefore very

important that employees disclose, if necessary in confidence, that they have a disability so that this can be taken into account when making any employment decisions relating to the employee.

- Abuse and/or harassment – discrimination also covers actions which amount to abuse and/or harassment of people or groups of people because for example they are a member of a national, racial or ethnic minority group, a woman, a lesbian, a gay man or have a disability or illness.
- Third party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers.
- Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably or is discriminated against because she/he has pursued or intends to pursue their rights in respect of alleged discrimination.
- Institutional racism occurs where the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in the processes or attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination, to unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.
- Racist incidents constitute any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. If the victim doesn't want to complain, another person may do so.

Discrimination in any form is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

## 4. Staff and Volunteer development

Decisions about learning and development opportunities will be made in accordance with our Training and Development Policy, and all staff and volunteers will have access to opportunities to enable them to develop in line with our aims and objectives. Training is acknowledged as an essential factor in the achievement of equal opportunities. All managers will consider the implications of the policy when developing and implementing training decisions and plans.

## 5. Service provision

- All Community First's services and activities are covered by this policy.
- We will promote equality and diversity in our work with our members, other agencies or individuals.
- Our services will be reviewed regularly and changed where needed.
- All trainers, facilitators and consultants contracted to work for Community First will be required to support our Equality and Diversity policy.

## 6. Recruitment, Selection and Promotion

- We believe that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment because of the reasons given in the Statement of Intent.
- Employees will always be selected or promoted on the basis of objective job-related criteria and candidates will be assessed objectively against these requirements, taking into account any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with disability.
- Staff appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination is occurring at the point of selection. A separate Recruitment Policy gives full details of this process.

## 7. Other aspects of our work pertaining to equality and diversity

- Office accommodation; we will make every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community.
- Purchasing; we reserve the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Promotion of policy; Copies of this policy will be freely available to staff, volunteers, members and any other interested parties. A laminated copy of the Statement of Intent, together with a named contact for more information, will be placed in a prominent position in our offices.
- Travel; Community First recognises that not everyone has access to personal transport or is able to use it and will plan its services and activities with this in mind.
- Working Practices; Community First will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place the work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if it considers it has good reasons for doing so, which will be unrelated to any prohibited ground of discrimination.

## 8. Implementation and monitoring

- Monitoring of the Equality and Diversity policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will review the policy periodically.
- Induction for committee members and new staff will include a briefing on the

Equality and Diversity policy.

- A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality action plan will be given to all new staff, volunteers, Directors and new members of Community First and to any member on request.
- Training may be provided for employees, Directors and volunteers on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that are relevant to equality and diversity.

## 9. The Board of Directors

- All Directors will affirm their commitment to the Equality and Diversity policy.
- Membership of Community First Board of Directors should aim to reflect a fair balance and representation of the local community and should endeavour to redress any imbalance of under-represented groups.

## 10. Community First Policies and Procedures

Other policies support our commitment to equality and diversity. These include flexi-time, parental and dependants leave, annual leave, recruitment, discipline, grievance, harassment, statement of terms and conditions and induction.