

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Volunteer Centre Sutton

ACCEPTS that in society certain groups or individuals are denied equality on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, caring responsibilities, disability, gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion/belief or any other factor irrelevant to the purpose in view .

WELCOMES the statutory requirements laid down in

- the Equal Pay Act 1970;
- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations Amendment Act Feb 2000 ;
- the NHS Community Care Act 1990;
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996;
- the Human Rights Act Nov 1998;
- the Employment (Religion or Belief) and (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.

COMPLIES with the codes of practice of the commission for racial equality (CRE) and the equal opportunities commission (EOC)

RECOGNISES that it has moral and social responsibilities that go beyond the provisions of the above-mentioned Acts and Regulations, and that it should support and contribute to the wider process of change through all aspects of its work and practices in order to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and diversity.

IS COMMITTED to taking positive steps to ensure that

- all people are treated with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all .
- equality of opportunity and diversity is promoted.
- services are accessible, appropriate and delivered fairly to all;
- the mix of its employees, volunteers and management committees reflects,
- as far as possible, the broad mix of the population of Sutton;
- traditionally disadvantaged sections of the community are encouraged to participate in policy decisions about, and the management of the services provided .

EQUAL & DIVERSITY

POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1 LEGISLATION

The following is a summary of the legislation which underpins the Equality & Diversity Policy of Volunteer Centre Sutton

1.1 The Equal Pay Act 1970 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975

These Acts make it illegal to discriminate between men and women or married and unmarried people. This applies not only in recruitment but also in terms and conditions of subsequent employment. We also need to ensure that Borough-wide both men and women have equal access to services.

1.2 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

This Act aims to benefit those who have been convicted of a criminal offence and who have not been convicted again during their rehabilitation period. The length of the rehabilitation period depends on the sentence for the original offence.

1.3 The Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations Amendment Act Feb 2000

Except in certain clearly defined circumstances (eg need of a particular language as a prerequisite) this Act makes it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic background. It also urges the implementation of policies which lead to equality of opportunity in the delivery of services.

1.4 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This Act states that employers and service providers must not discriminate against people with disabilities. The Act introduces new measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many people with disabilities face. It gives individuals new rights in the areas of employment, access to goods, facilities and the management, buying or renting of land and property.

1.5 The NHS & Community Care Act 1990

This Act recognises the role of carers as previously expressed in "Caring for People" 1989.

1.6 Section 8 of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996

This Act came into effect on 27 January 1997 and creates a new criminal offence which can be committed by employers. Employers must make certain basic checks before taking on a new employee to ensure they are entitled to live and work in the United Kingdom.

1.7 The Human Rights Act November 1998

The objective of the Human Rights Act is to promote a culture of respect for human rights and responsibilities which over time will permeate the whole of our institutions and society.

1.8 The Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and The Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

These regulations refer to practices relating to diversity of religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

2 COMMITMENT

Equality and diversity are central to the work of Sutton Volunteer Centre.

The Centre will treat all people with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all. It will promote equality of opportunity and diversity. It will eliminate all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, gender, marital status, caring responsibilities, disability, gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation, religion/ belief, irrelevant offending background or any other factor irrelevant to the purpose in view.

It will tackle social exclusion, inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. For this policy to be successful, it is essential that everyone is committed to and involved in its delivery. The Centre's goal is to work towards a just society free from discrimination, harassment and prejudice. The Centre aims to embed this in all its policies, procedures, day-to-day practices and external relationships.

3 AIMS

The Centre aims to:

- Provide services that are accessible according to need
- Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in volunteering, employment and development
- Create effective partnerships with all parts of our community.

4 OBJECTIVES

The Centre's objective is to realise its standards by:

- Sustaining, regularly evaluating and continually improving its services to ensure equality and diversity principles and best practice are embedded in our performance to meet the needs of individuals and groups.
- Working together with the community to provide accessible and relevant service provision that responds to service users' needs.
- Ensuring staff, volunteers and trustees are representative of the community served and the employment policies are fair and robust.
- Responding to volunteer's & employees' needs and encouraging their development to increase their contribution to effective service delivery.
- Recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that all people make to the organisation.
- Challenging discrimination.
- Providing fair resource allocation.
- Being accountable.

5 WHY HAVE THIS POLICY?

The Centre recognises, respects and values diversity in its employees, volunteers and service users.

The Centre has this policy because it is a people-led organisation that must always ensure it meets the needs of the community through fair and appropriate employment and development of the people who work and volunteer for the Centre.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

PROCEDURES

1 RESPONSIBILITIES

Centre Trustees have overall responsibility for ownership and direction of the policy and procedures.

Managers have overall managerial responsibility for the direction of the policy and procedures and staff are accountable for the implementation and delivery.

All managers must be familiar with the policy and procedures. They must promote and monitor the policy and procedures actively through their teams and through business workplans, service delivery, volunteer & employment practices and development.

Every employee must read, understand and implement the policy and procedures through their work and actions – supported by team discussion and training - and take personal responsibility to implement and promote the policy and procedures in day-to-day dealings with customers, partners and each other.

The Centre will ensure that all associated groups or individuals, whether working for or with the Centre, understand and abide by its policy and procedures.

2 ACTION AND EVALUATION

Equality and diversity do not stand alone – rather they must be integrated into everything the Centre does to improve services.

The Centre will take lawful action to address under-representation of people in its workplace. As part of this, equalities targets and measures will be reported to the Equality & Diversity Advisory Group on a six-monthly basis.

3 SERVICE DELIVERY, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Centre will consult with different groups of the community to understand service needs. It will monitor and analyse services to ensure they are free from all forms of discrimination. The Centre is committed to working in partnership with different groups of the community.

In engaging with others outside, the Centre will influence third parties to adopt and use its Equality & Diversity policy and procedures to guide their service delivery, volunteer management, & employment policy and practices.

4 STRATEGY TO ENSURE SERVICES REACH BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS

To ensure Centre services reach and are relevant to black and minority ethnic organisations or individuals as appropriate, Sutton Volunteer Centre will:

- Be pro-active in communicating with black and ethnic minority organisations or individuals as appropriate through a variety of networking meetings and by undertaking specific visits to groups to ensure the services reach all potential users.

- Ensure that trustees from ethnic minority groups are represented on the Board of Management.
- Continually monitor the profile of the Board and compare the membership with local demographics.
- Draw membership from across all groups and individuals in the community.
- Develop and implement a 3 year strategic plan which is reviewed annually by staff and trustees. The review highlights areas of work with under-represented groups, reviews developments and identifies new initiatives.
- Monitor volunteers and service users for Equality & Diversity on a monthly basis and compare statistics with local demographics.
- Monitor and evaluate all areas of Centre service through a system of sub-committees and advisory groups.

5 EMPLOYMENT POLICY, EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The Centre will develop and adopt fair employment policy and practices and an equal pay policy and procedure. It will review staff & volunteer recruitment and selection procedures to ensure it operates non-discriminatory practices. The Centre will also review terms and conditions of employment, facilities and benefits and make its employment procedures consistent with current legislation and employment codes of practice.

The Centre will deliver equality and diversity training for all. It will ensure equality and diversity form an important part of its induction training. Its aim is to strengthen the equality and diversity aspect of all training provided.

The policy and procedures are issued to all employees and the Centre's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures statement will be provided to all job applicants.

6 COMPLAINTS

The Centre acknowledges that people have the right to complain about either the service they have received or their experience in the workplace. The Centre has a Complaints Procedure for service users/volunteers and a Grievance Procedure for employment complaints, together with a procedure for Harassment and Bullying for those who feel they face discrimination through service delivery or in the workplace.

The Centre takes all complaints seriously and will take appropriate action against those found to be in breach of the policy. Employees found to be in breach of the policy may be liable to disciplinary action including dismissal.

7 LANGUAGE

The Centre will respect difference and recognise that prejudice and discrimination can be reinforced by the use of inappropriate language. The Centre will not tolerate making fun of, labelling or patronising people through the language used or the accent or dialect they have.

The Centre will provide services through language that is clear, inclusive and accessible.

8 SUMMARY STATEMENT ON EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The following statements may be used as indicated:

- **On publicity materials**

"Volunteer Centre Sutton is committed to and operates an Equality & Diversity policy and procedures".

- **On job advertisements & related material and volunteer recruitment materials**

Positive action statements may be used on job advertisements. Their use will depend on the results of previous monitoring information and their contents should always be checked against current standards.

A reference to the Centre's commitment to Equality & Diversity should always be made as follows:

" Volunteer Centre Sutton is committed to and operates an Equality & Diversity policy and procedures in relation to both employment and service provision."

- **On Job descriptions and volunteer role descriptions**

" Volunteer Centre Sutton is committed to Equality & Diversity in employment and provision of services and expects all those working with the Centre to understand and promote the policy in their work."

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Diversity and Discrimination defined and how the Centre responds

1. What is diversity?

Recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that people make and treating them fairly and with respect. This includes providing accessible and relevant service provision that responds to the customers needs, ensuring that any workforce is representative of the community served, creating an inclusive environment.

Volunteer Centre Sutton's response

The Centre recognises and appreciates the diversity of our community and it strives to work closely with representatives to provide services that are accessible and that meet the diverse needs of our community.

The Centre recognises and values the differences and individual contribution that people make to the organisation. The Centre strives to ensure that diversity and equality are embedded in all policies, procedures and practices, responding to employees' needs and encouraging employee development to increase their contribution to effective service delivery.

2. What is discrimination?

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional or unintentional. Individuals, groups or whole institutions/organisations can be discriminatory. Perception is as important as intention. Each person is the best judge of their own experience of discrimination — it is essential to take the views of people seriously in this respect.

- **Direct discrimination:** is when a person is treated less favourably than others because of, for example, their race, gender or sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief.
- **Indirect discrimination:** Is when a criterion, provision or practice is applied that disadvantages people of, for example, a particular race, gender or sexual orientation, disability age, religion or belief, unless it can be objectively justified.
- **Individual discrimination:** is personal attitudes of superiority, for example that disabled people are not as capable as non-disabled people, white people believe they are superior to black people, men believe they are better than women. For example the awarding of a job to someone because they are white. It can also be where someone prejudices another person because of the group with which they are identified.
- **Group discrimination:** is where prejudicial attitudes and behaviour are shared and reinforced so that there is a culture within the group that encourages discrimination.
- **Institutional discrimination:** Institutional discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate service to people because of their difference including race, gender, caring responsibilities, disability, gender reassignment, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion or belief. It can be seen in processes, attitudes, behaviour and power imbalances that discriminate through unwitting

prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping, which disadvantage these people.

3. What is Racism?

Racism is a general term to describe the conduct, practice and attitude that advantages or disadvantages people because of their skin colour, culture or ethnic origin

Institutional racism is the failure of an organisation to provide a service to people because of their skin colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in processes, attitudes, behaviour and power imbalances that discriminate through unwitting prejudice, ignorance and thoughtlessness. It leads to the disadvantage of black and minority ethnic people.

Volunteer Centre Sutton s response

- The Centre recognises the harmful effect that racism has had, and continues to have, on black and minority ethnic people both in employment and in service delivery.
- The Centre appreciates the diversity of our community and strives to provide services that meet their needs.
- The Centre acknowledges that black and minority ethnic people are under-represented in our workforce. The Centre will take lawful action to address the imbalances through recruitment, promotion and training and development.

The Centre is committed to working with other organisations to combat race discrimination in the community through preventative action.

4. What is Sex Discrimination?

Sexism comes from the belief that one gender is superior to the other. Sexism can be seen in organisations' power holders, structures, systems and practices.

Volunteer Centre Sutton s response

The Centre knows that negative attitudes can lead to sexual harassment and discrimination in access to jobs, training and services. The Centre will strive to combat this through providing equal access to jobs, development and services.

The Centre will take lawful action to ensure that any discriminatory barriers are overcome and will monitor the results of our actions.

The Centre recognises that the burden for caring and domestic responsibilities has traditionally fallen upon women. The Centre recognises and supports the fact that women and men will need to work flexibly, or part-time or take a break to meet their caring responsibilities. The Centre will support employees, as far as practicable, to care for others who depend on them in emergency and other situations whatever their gender.

Managers must recognise the needs of employees isolated in single sex dominated workplaces and ensure the culture is not a harassing one.

The Centre is committed to working in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment.

5. What is disability discrimination?

Physical barriers in the environment and attitudinal barriers in society lead to disability discrimination. Disabled people are disadvantaged by these factors rather than their impairment.

Volunteer Centre Sutton's response

The Centre seeks to address the differing needs of disabled people through services. In employment, it is committed to making reasonable adjustments to jobs and working conditions to support disabled people at work, either in the physical environment or through information.

6. What is age discrimination?

Negative assumptions can be made about people because of their age — in particular young people and older people. The assumptions can be that young people lack maturity and that older people lack flexibility and the ability to learn. These attitudes can become built into organisations and shown in their policies and practices — for example advertising jobs for a particular age range only.

Volunteer Centre Sutton's response

The Centre recognises that ageism is harmful because it undervalues the contribution that young and older people make.

The Centre consults carefully with young and older people to ensure it meets their needs wherever possible.

In employment the Centre is committed to taking focused action to recruit and retain young people because they are under-represented in our workforce.

7. What is heterosexism and homophobia?

Heterosexism is the belief that heterosexuality is the norm and any other form of sexuality is abnormal.

Homophobia is a collection of negative attitudes and prejudices that leads to discrimination against lesbian women, gay men, bi-sexual people and the transgender community.

Volunteer Centre Sutton's response

The Centre recognises that discrimination can take place both in service delivery and employment because of a person's sexual orientation.

In employment the Centre acknowledges the discrimination that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals face and will create a climate of respect in the workplace where all people feel safe to come out if they wish.

The Centre is committed to working in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment and domestic violence. The Centre will take preventative action where possible.

8. What is religious discrimination?

Making jokes about someone's faith, belittling beliefs or unreasonably promoting your own faith can be offensive. To hold a religious or other belief is a basic human right that should be treated with respect and tolerance.

Volunteer Centre Sutton s response

In the delivery of our services The Centre will ensure sensitivity and respect to service users faith and avoid service delivery that is offensive to people 's beliefs.

In employment the Centre will endeavour to provide scope for prayer and reflection and reasonable time off for festivals that are a part of a person' s religion or belief. The Centre also welcomes different forms of dress according to cultural and religious backgrounds balanced with the need to provide a safe and customer -focused place of work.

The Centre is committed to promoting a culture where people can practice their religion or belief in safety and without fear of harassment and discrimination .

9. Equalities law

The Centre is committed to promoting and observing equalities legislation to create a better workplace for all.

Month:

**VOLUNTEER CENTRE SUTTON
EQUALITY & DIVERSITY MONITORING FORM**

This form is used for **monitoring purposes only**. The information is strictly confidential but to be effective, **ALL SECTIONS SHOULD BE ANSWERED IN FULL**. Thank you for your co-operation.

Gender

Female

Male

Age Range

Under16

16-19

20-29

30-59

60-74

75+

Ethnic Group - I would describe myself as (please tick one box)

White

Mixed

Chinese or Other Ethnic Group

Asian or Asian British

Black or Black British

Indian

Caribbean

Pakistani

African

Bangladeshi

Other Black

Other Asian

Occupation

Full-time Employed

Part-time Employed

Self Employed

Non Employed

Unemployed

Student

Retired

Responsibilities

Parent/Guardian of child under the age of 5

Carer

Area of Residence

Beddington

Belmont

Carshalton

Cheam

Sutton

Wallington

Worcester Park

Out of Borough (please write in) _____

Please complete other side of form

