



SWINDON CARERS CENTRE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Swindon Carers Centre wholeheartedly supports the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in service provision, the employment of staff and opportunities for volunteers and service users.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all.

We will actively seek to eliminate all forms of discrimination, direct or indirect, which restricts or hinders the promotion of equal opportunities, the provision of equal treatment and the valuing of diversity.

The organisation aims to ensure that no service user, employee or volunteer receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic i.e. age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass colleagues, service users or stakeholders because of a protected characteristic, in the provision of the Swindon Carers Centre's services.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

OUR COMMITMENT

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff, volunteers and service users are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and volunteer is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- To promote equality in the workplace.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and equality of opportunity for all. This includes: recruitment, training, development and progression for staff and volunteers.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Trustees and Chief Executive. The Management Team will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination.

The Management Team will ensure that:

- all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- accurate records are maintained.

RECRUITMENT

The Management Team will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic audits.

1. It is the aim of the Swindon Carers Centre to ensure that no employee, job applicant or volunteer receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of any of the **protected characteristics**.
2. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
3. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees & volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff & Volunteers and the attitudes of staff and volunteers are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice or feel they have been discriminated against

THIRD PARTIES

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee or volunteer of Swindon Carers Centre is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as service user and their families or stakeholders. Swindon Carers Centre will not tolerate such actions against its staff and volunteers, and the employee or volunteer concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once. The Management Team will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. Swindon Carers Centre policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Swindon Carers Centre recognises the importance of ensuring their services are accessible to disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.
- Review services on an ongoing basis to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to disabled service users. If necessary, Swindon Carers would take action to address any arising issues.

EQUALITY TRAINING

Equality and Diversity will be included in the induction process of all staff and volunteers.

Briefing sessions will be regularly held for staff and volunteers on equality issues to ensure that they are up to date.

Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

MONITORING

The organisation states its intention not to discriminate, or for any employees or volunteers to do so. A monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.

The 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.

There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.

We will review and maintain monitoring information on staff and/or volunteers who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.

In areas where reviews of monitoring highlight potential concerns or the need for further consideration, we will undertake an **equality impact assessment** process to highlight any organisational action required.

The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

If monitoring shows that Swindon Carers Centre or areas within it are not representative of our local population, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the organisation, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, organisational policies and practices and the implementation of a positive action.

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the organisations Grievance Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the organisation's Disciplinary Policy.

REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually.