

Equal Opportunities Policy

Date	Review Date	Chairman	Vice-Chair	Centre Manager
01.08.18	01.08.19	Neil Jones	Anne Everitt	Sally Mills

The following are important telephone numbers that must be kept up to date:

Contacts	Home	Mobile
Chairman of Trustees Neil Jones		
Vice Chair Anne Everitt		
Centre Manager Sally Mills	01483 813846	

The purpose of this document is to communicate our commitment to equality of opportunity in employment to ensure all employees, job applicants and volunteers are treated fairly and equally. It will also support the objective of providing a working environment free from all forms of discrimination. The policy applies to all staff and volunteers and it is expected that they will put this policy into practice.

1. Policy Statement

The charity is fully committed to providing equality in the workplace. This includes providing fair opportunities for and during employment irrespective of any protected characteristic – age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

We aim to create a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form where all staff are treated with dignity and respect. We will not unlawfully discriminate in the methods of recruitment and selection or in the opportunities provided for employment, training or other benefit.

All decisions will be made fairly and objectively and working practices will be applied fairly and consistently as far as reasonably possible. Reasonable steps will be taken to overcome any particular disadvantage these may cause.

2. Specific Responsibilities

The Therapy Garden has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and ensuring the Equality Act 2010, associated legislation and Codes of Practice are complied with. The Centre Manager is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy and ensuring adherence to all employment-related policies, procedures and practices.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility not to discriminate or harass other staff or volunteers and to report any such behaviour to the Centre Manager.

3. Forms of Discrimination

The following are forms of discrimination that this policy aims to avoid –

Direct Discrimination - when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. This can also occur by way of association, when a person is treated less favourably because, for example, their partner has the protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination - when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in that way has the right to complain.

To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate business reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.

Victimisation - where someone is treated unfavourably because they have raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action. This could be in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination against the charity or because he/she has supported someone else in doing this.

Harassment - unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable.

Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period of time and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they find unpleasant.

Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to a protected characteristic it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.

Discrimination arising from Disability - In addition to the above, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified. Furthermore, employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled applicants, employees or other workers are not substantially disadvantaged.

4. Recruitment and Selection

The Therapy Garden recruitment and selection procedures will be free from bias or discrimination. Recruitment procedures will be conducted objectively and based on specific and reasonable job-related criteria. We will consider making reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure disabled applicants are not substantially disadvantaged.

Where possible, vacancies will be advertised as being suitable for flexible working.

5. Career Development and Training

All staff will be given an appropriate induction enabling them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role. All employees will be encouraged to develop their full potential and we will not unreasonably deny access to training or other career development opportunities. These will be determined objectively taking into account the needs of the business and available resources.

Selection for promotion will be based on objective criteria and decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

6. Terms and Conditions

Our terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly with benefits and facilities made available to all our staff who should have access to them.

Terms and conditions of employment for part-time employees will be provided on a pro-rata basis to full-time employees. For fixed term employees, terms and conditions will be comparable to those given to permanent employees.

7. Employment Practices and Policies

We aim to ensure that employment policies and practices, including any rules or requirements, do not directly or indirectly discriminate and are applied in a non-discriminatory manner. In particular we will ensure that all disciplinary decisions are fair and consistent and that selection for redundancy is based on objective criteria.

We will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the working environment or work arrangement that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that these cause to disabled staff.

We will aim as far as reasonably practicable to accommodate the requirements of different religions and cultures and will consider requests from employees to vary or change their working hours to enable them to care for a dependent.

8. Working Environment

All individuals have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and we will take reasonable steps to protect staff from discrimination, bullying or harassment. In the event of a complaint, we will take appropriate action to prevent, as far as possible, a further occurrence.

All staff are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour at work or that occurs during the course of employment including work events or those located on/off the premises.

We have a separate policy for dealing with complaints of bullying and harassment.

9. Equal Opportunities Monitoring

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives including analysis of –

- Composition of job applicants and decisions in recruitment
- Composition of our workforce
- Access to training, promotion and other opportunities and benefits
- Impact of our employment policies including use of disciplinary and grievance procedure
- Dismissals and other terminations

10. Raising a complaint of discrimination

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you should raise the matter in accordance with the Problem Solving Procedure, a copy of which can be found in the Centre Manager's office.

An employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, or breached this policy in any other way, will be subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, up to and including dismissal.

Volunteers will be subject to appropriate formal action that may, depending on the circumstances, involve terminating any agreement.

We will take very seriously any malicious or unwarranted allegations of discrimination and will take appropriate action where necessary.

11. Raising Awareness of this Policy

The Therapy Garden will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The Therapy Garden policy folder located in the Centre Manager's Office containing all the charity's policies. Staff and volunteers are to be informed when the policies are updated.
- During staff and volunteer induction
- Through emails to staff and volunteers when policies are updated
- The Therapy Garden policies can be accessed on the charity's website

12. Linked Policies

- Recruitment Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all employees and a copy can be found in the main office. Job seekers and applicants can access the policy via the charity website and can be sent a copy on request. New starters will receive a copy of the policy on the commencement of their contract.

Any questions regarding the policy should be directed to the Centre Manager. The policy does not form part of an employee's contract and may be amended at any time.

The policy should be reviewed in the light of any trends or new legal changes and at least once every two years.

This policy was adopted on the 01 August 2018 by:

Chair of Trustees Neil Jones		Date:	
Vice-Chair Anne Everitt		Date:	
Centre Manager Sally Mills		Date:	