

Northmoor Community Association



Advancing Skills
and Learning



Relieving Poverty



Promoting Health
and Wellbeing



Quality of Life

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES **AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

1.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

1.1 The N.C.A aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and seeks to ensure that equality and diversity principles underpin all areas of the organisation's work and service provision.

1.2 The N.C.A recognises that many people and groups suffer discrimination and face serious barriers when trying to fulfil their true potential. It also recognises that not all forms of unreasonable and unfair discrimination are the subject of legislation. It is the aim of this organisation to take positive steps to redress discrimination, to improve equality of opportunity and to combat any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reasons not directly related to their ability to do a job for this organisation or to their eligibility to receive services from us.

1.3 It is unlawful to discriminate against people because of their gender or gender assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality/sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, or because they are disabled, married or in a civil partnership, a member of a trade union, work part time or on a fixed-term contract. It is also unlawful to discriminate against people either because they are perceived to have a certain characteristic or because they associate with someone who has a certain characteristic. We recognise that people may experience discrimination for many additional social, educational and economic reasons such as their language, health, caring responsibilities, and trade union activity, where they live, how they speak and whether they work flexibly. This policy will apply equally to all these circumstances.

1.4 The N.C.A will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or abuse of people who are members of staff or of people connected with the services we provide.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination. There are two main types of equality encompassed in equal opportunities:

- Equality of treatment is concerned with treating everyone the same. Thus, in an organisational context it recognises that institutional discrimination may exist in the form of unfair procedures and practices that favour those with some personal attributes, over others without them. The task of equal opportunities is therefore concerned with the elimination of these barriers.

- Equality of outcome focuses on policies that either have an equal impact on different groups or intend the same outcomes for different groups.

Diversity describes the range of visible and non-visible differences that exist between people. Managing diversity harnesses these differences to create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where talents are fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met.

(Kandola and Fullerton 1998).

N.C.A is intent on advancing equality and diversity as key features within all its activities, as it believes this to be ethically right and socially responsible.

Commitment to Equality and Diversity

N.C.A believes that excellence will be achieved by recognising the value of every individual. Our aim is to create an environment which respects the diversity of staff, volunteers and service users which enables them to achieve their full potential, to contribute fully, and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement with the organisation.

N.C.A acknowledges the following basic rights for all:

- To receive a professional and appropriate service
- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- To receive encouragement to reach their full potential

3.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favorably than others in similar circumstances on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, sexuality, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, membership or non-membership of trade union, "spent convictions" of ex-offenders, class, age, political or religious belief.

2.2 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which adversely affects one particular group considerably more than another and cannot be strictly justified in terms of requirements for performing the job.

We shall treat everyone equally and with the same attention, courtesy and respect. No individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against. This includes, but not exclusively, discrimination because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex and sexual orientation
- Perceived sexual orientation

We will empower people to recognise and counter discrimination, and be supported in doing so. No form of intimidation; bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

4.0 LEGISLATION

N.C.A will comply with all relevant legislation* and good practice. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we and our staff and volunteers do not unlawfully discriminate under the Equality Act 2010.

4.1 The Organisation's Responsibility as an Employer

The N.C.A's Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the equality and diversity policy. It is however the responsibility of the Centre Manager to implement, monitor and evaluate the equality and diversity policy in terms of employment practice and service delivery. S/he is also under a duty to ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly kept informed of the policy's implementation and the implications of the Board of Trustees' decisions and policies for equality and diversity issues

It should not be overlooked that harassment can take many forms, e.g. age, religion, skin colour, sexual preference, disability – even dialect or accent – can all form the basis of unwanted aggression and attention. Victimisation in the widest sense of the word is also a form of harassment and those exposed to or subject to such action need protection.

The organisation will inform its employees and volunteers of their responsibilities and opportunities under the Equal Rights Legislation; will make sure that the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy is known to all staff and applicants.

NC.A will take disciplinary action against employees and/or volunteers who are found to infringe its Equality and Diversity Policy.

4.2 What the Organisation expects from its Employees and Volunteers

While the main responsibility for providing equal opportunities lies with the organisation, individual employees and volunteers at all levels have responsibilities too. Eradicating discrimination depends on everyone's collaboration.

Employees and volunteers should not harass abuse or intimidate other employees, volunteers and service users on any grounds.

Employees and volunteers should co-operate with measures introduced by the organisation to make sure there is equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Employees and volunteers must not victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.

5.0 HARASSMENT

It is N.C.A's Policy to provide an environment, which is free of any type of harassment. Harassment can be defined as -

“Unwanted, uninvited and unwelcome action, behaviour or language by one or more people, against one person or a group of people, which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment within the workplace, whether intentional or not.”

Employees and volunteers may not always recognise that their behaviour constitutes harassment; they must recognise that what is acceptable to one employee or volunteer may not be acceptable to another.

Any harassment situation will be treated totally individually and without bias, assumption or prejudice.

Every effort will be made to deal with any incident quickly, effectively and with utmost sensitivity and confidentiality. Unless the complaint requires immediate formal intervention the aim of the organisation will be to resolve the situation informally in the first instance. Issues may demand either formal or informal resolution as circumstances around incidents may vary depending on the misconduct identified.

If further intervention is required, complaints of harassment will be dealt with through the grievance procedure and any employee or volunteer who feels they are the subject of harassment may seek preliminary advice as indicated in the grievance procedure. Any such discussions will be strictly private and confidential with the aim of helping the individual to decide what course of action they wish to take to resolve the issue.

If the matter is referred to the formal stage of the grievance procedure, a full and thorough investigation will be carried out ensuring that confidentiality is maintained for those involved. Where harassment is confirmed as having taken place, the matter will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

6.0 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

6.1 Overview

N.C.A fully supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability. No applicant or employee shall receive less favourable treatment because of disability.

N.C.A is committed to maintaining and managing a diverse work force. It is in the interest of N.C.A and those who work for it to ensure that all available human resource talents and skills are considered when employment opportunities arise.

6.2 Purpose

- a) To ensure that N.C.A complies with the Equality Act 2010 (which replaces the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and to ensure that disabled people falling within the definition of the Act are treated equally and fairly.
- b) To ensure we recruit and retain the best people for N.C.A.

6.3 Scope

The Disability Discrimination Policy covers all staff and job applicants. This also covers employees who become disabled during their employment. Where relevant it also covers staff employed by outside agencies working on N.C.A's premises.

6.4 Guidelines

- Recruitment, training and promotion are carried out in line with the code of practice in the N.C.A Recruitment and Selection Policy. Clear job descriptions and person specifications are used (where appropriate) to enhance objective assessments and to ensure that decisions are made solely on objective and job related criteria.
- N.C.A will endeavour to give training and guidance to all relevant Staff, to ensure that the risk of possible discriminatory attitudes affecting decisions are minimised and that there is an understanding of the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- N.C.A operates a Grievance Procedure to enable grievances, including those relating to unfair discrimination on grounds of disability, to be formally heard.
- All reasonable and necessary changes will be investigated and any justified changes will be made to the workplace and to employment arrangements so that disabled people are not at any substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. This covers all areas of employment, including recruitment, promotion and training.
- In recruitment and selection, N.C.A will modify selection techniques, where appropriate, and make any other reasonable changes to ensure that disabled people can be considered equally with non-disabled candidates.
- N.C.A will ensure that disabled people will receive equal treatment in training and development, and, where appropriate, will supply additional training. A flexible approach will be adopted and, where possible and justified, consideration to reallocation of duties, time off for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment or other appropriate measures to ensure equal opportunity.

- Every endeavour will be made to ensure that contract workers are not discriminated against because of their disability and will ensure that any contract workers and other agencies that may be used are aware of this policy.
- N.C.A actively encourages promotion of this policy in its internal and external recruitment by ensuring that advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications do not discriminate. We welcome applications from disabled people.
- N.C.A will ensure that all new employees are aware of this policy as part of their induction and will regularly review and monitor this policy to ensure its implementation and effectiveness.

7.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 2000
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Part-time working regulations 2000
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2010

8.0 SUMMARY

- N.C.A Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Centre Manager, has overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation operates within a framework of equality of opportunity.
- Ultimately it is the duty of all staff to accept their personal responsibility for the practical application of this policy.
- In the case of recruitment of new employees equality and diversity will be embedded throughout the process.
- Any complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner, in accordance with N.C.A's Complaints Policy and Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

9.0 OTHER READING AND LINKED POLICES

- Grievance Procedure
- Complaints & Compliments Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- Whistle blowing Policy & Procedure

10.0 REVIEWED AND POLICY REVISIONS

This policy will be reviewed and amended every three years or as necessary, to reflect best practice and/or changes in legislation. All staff or volunteers should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of any aspect of the policy through normal channels to the Centre Manager or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

Policy Ref: GP 1	Approved: 28/02/2017
Last Revision: 18/02/2017	Next Review: February 2020
Signature: (Chairperson of NCA Board)	