



# Equality and Diversity Policy

Houghton Regis Community Development Charity (HRCDC) aims to encourage, value and manage diversity and is committed to providing equality for all. HRCDC wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities.

HRCDC is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst volunteers and users of its services. Equality and diversity will be considered in all activities and resources. This policy will be implemented within the framework of current legislation.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in HRCDC volunteering and service delivery and to eliminate discrimination on grounds of:

**Gender** (including sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender re-assignment)

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at all levels of the organisation through:

- challenging gender stereotypes
- supporting employees and volunteers in balancing their life at work and at home

Volunteers and service users are treated fairly and equally irrespective of their marital/civil partnership or family status. HRCDC will take positive steps to support a transgender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

**Race** (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)

The racial and cultural diversity of the local community is represented through:

- challenging racial stereotypes
- understanding, respecting and valuing racial and cultural difference and perspectives
- encouraging and enabling members of minority ethnic groups to volunteer for HRCDC at all levels

## Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued through:

- focusing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities and not making false assumptions that disabled people are unable to do certain things
- making appropriate adjustments in the workplace so that people can reach their full potential regardless of any disability.

### **Sexual orientation**

People are treated fairly irrespective of their sexuality through:

- respecting the rights of everyone irrespective of whether or not they are open about their sexuality
- respecting different lifestyles even if someone's different lifestyle conflicts with one's own religious or cultural beliefs
- challenging negative stereotypical views
- celebrating and welcoming significant lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) events in the same way that similar events of importance to heterosexual people are celebrated

### **Religion or belief**

People are treated fairly irrespective of their religious beliefs, faith or lack of belief.

Demands of religion (e.g. prayer times and religious holidays) and of culture (traditional dress) are accepted.

### **Age**

Age diversity is promoted and valued through:

- challenging age stereotyping, recognising that the new ideas and fresh approaches can come from anyone irrespective of their age
- recognising the benefits of mixed-age volunteers

### **Eliminating discrimination**

Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied which cannot be justified. Forms of direct discrimination include less favourable treatment (denial of access to or a poor level of service), harassment or victimisation.

Harassment occurs when someone's actions or words, based on the relevant grounds, are unwelcome and violate another person's dignity or create an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

HRCDC will not tolerate harassment in any form and in particular:

**Racial harassment** is unlawful. Incidents include:

- physical assaults/threats against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity
- racist insult/joke/name calling
- racist graffiti/any other written insult
- provocative behaviour (e.g. wearing racist badges or insignia)
- racial comments in meetings conversation/workshops
- attempting to recruit for racist organisations or groups
- racist literature (leaflets, comics, magazines) brought into the organisation's premises
- providing a platform for racism

**Sexual harassment** is unlawful. The definition adopted by HRCDC is:

- Repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks which are offensive to the person involved, which cause them to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed or which creates a threatening or intimidating environment.

**Harassment against disabled people.** It is unlawful to subject a disabled person to harassment by engaging in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the disabled person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him/her.

**Victimisation** means treating someone less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination (a "protected act") or are thought to have done so; or because they have supported someone else who has made a complaint of discrimination.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where the effect of provisions, criteria or practices imposed by an employer have an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other. Indirect discrimination generally occurs when a rule or condition, which is applied equally to everyone, can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group; the rule is to their disadvantage, and it cannot be justified on other grounds.

HRCDC will look to overcome indirect discrimination by:

- provision of training for volunteers, and where possible service users
- provision of information about relevant support organisations
- making clear its expectations of volunteers in the conduct of their duties in any circumstances where they represent HRCDC

## Responsibilities

HRCDC's commitment to equality and diversity means that everyone involved with HRCDC has a duty to:

- promote equality and diversity in the delivery of HRCDC services
- ensure that everyone associated with HRCDC is treated in a non-discriminatory way
- promote a welcoming environment in which individuals from all backgrounds feel welcome, valued and respected promote this equality and diversity policy

Staff and trustees have added responsibility to:

- ensure systems, procedures and services do not discriminate
- promote and implement diversity within the management of service provision
- provide proper training to put this equality and diversity policy into practice
- challenge inappropriate behaviour immediately
- listen to and respect others, and not dismiss their problems as "trivial"
- set a positive example in everything they do

## Volunteering

It is crucial that all volunteers can take part and enjoy the activities without discrimination. HRCDC believes that volunteers should not be excluded from any opportunity without due reason.

Volunteers will not be discriminated against in the advice and support they are given. Nor will they be denied access to opportunities because of their assumed abilities, skills or behaviour and each volunteer will be judged on his/her own merits. HRCDC will actively encourage and support volunteers to take part in the planning and implementation of their work.

## Monitoring, review and responsibility

The Trustees are responsible for implementing the equal opportunities policy. Any complaint or grievance should be made to the chair of the organisation.

Adopted on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2024

Review November 2026

Signed

