

SHREWSBURY HOUSE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Shrewsbury House Community Association (SHCA) is committed to celebrating diversity, promoting equality, fostering equal opportunities and tackling discrimination in all it does to ensure that employees, clients and service users are treated with respect and valued equally.

This means that SHCA is committed to ensuring that all its employees, potential employees and workers, clients and service users, are treated no less favourably and are not unlawfully discriminated against on the grounds of possessing a protected characteristic as defined in The Equality Act 2010.

The nine protected characteristics are:

- age,
- disability,
- colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin,
- sex
- gender reassignment
- marital/civil partnership status,
- pregnancy or maternity,
- religion or belief,
- sexual orientation,

SHCA will ensure that it complies with all relevant current legislation covering sex discrimination, race relations, disability discrimination, data protection, human rights and equality.

SHCA aims to ensure that its employees achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. SHCA has adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

SHCA will aim to create a working environment in which all people are encouraged to give their best, all decisions are based on merit and in which there is no bullying or harassment.

If Equal Opportunities are not applied then valuable talent and potential are wasted. Moreover when unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation takes place they bring about a climate of fear, insecurity and poor work performance.

As well as being unlawful these affect morale, the quality of the service and profitability. It is therefore vital that employees understand their responsibilities.

Equal Opportunities are taken seriously by SHCA and wilful failure to apply the policies or evidence of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, on the basis of the nine protected characteristics but not limited to these, are considered disciplinary offences and may result in disciplinary action.

2. WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

There should be no discrimination on any of the grounds set out in (1) above. The types of discrimination which are prohibited are defined below. Discrimination can occur in the following forms:

- 2.1 **Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of their membership of a protected group in relation to his or her employment. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional.
- 2.2 **Indirect discrimination** is putting a practice or condition for employment in place, which on the surface appears a 'neutral' requirement but in reality one of the protected groups finds the requirement more difficult to comply with.
- 2.3 **Disability discrimination** occurs where an individual is unjustifiably disadvantaged in employment/recruitment for a reason connected with his/her disability unless the discrimination cannot be avoided by making reasonable adjustments.
- 2.4 **Victimisation** occurs where an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues because he/she has taken action to assert their statutory rights and/or asserted their right not to be discriminated against as a member of a protected group and/or assisted a colleague with information in that regard.
- 2.5 **Harassment** occurs when an individual is subject to unwanted conduct which has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that individual or violating someone's dignity because they possess a protected characteristic.
- 2.6 **Associative discrimination** occurs when an individual is subject to Direct Discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- 2.7 **Discrimination by perception** occurs when an individual is subject to Direct Discrimination because others *think* that they possess a certain protected characteristic. This applies even if they do not possess this characteristic.
- 2.8 **Harassment by a third party** occurs when a third party, who the organisation/business is not in control of and does not employ, harasses an Employee.

3. IMPLEMENTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

It is a fundamental principle of our policies that all people are equally valued regardless of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, religion, belief, gender, marital/civil partner status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, disability, trade union membership or part/fixed term status.

3.1 SHCA is particularly concerned that equality of opportunity is maintained in the following areas:

- recruitment and selection
- promotion, appraisal, transfer and training
- terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services
- grievance and disciplinary procedures
- dismissals, resignations and redundancies.

3.2 SHCA is therefore, committed to promote equality of opportunity by ensuring that:

- Recruitment and employment decisions are made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Individuals will be assessed according to their capability to carry out a given job and assumptions will not be made that only certain types of people will be able to perform certain types of work. Job descriptions and person specifications will form part of the recruitment process. SHCA selection procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving its objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination;
- The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability are reviewed to ensure that whatever possible reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff can participate fully in the workplace;
- Person specifications are limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews are conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary. The use of experience, age requirements, gender, and qualifications in the job specification will only be used if they can be objectively justified;
- Appropriate training is provided, where possible, to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity. In certain circumstances an employee can be personally liable for discrimination against a fellow employee or job applicant;
- All staff have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Breach of the equal opportunity policy is potentially a serious disciplinary matter. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on

discriminatory grounds which breaches this policy is entitled to raise the matter through the SHCA Grievance Procedure;

- SHCA monitors its use of fixed term, part time employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. SHCA will monitor their progress to ensure they are accessing permanent vacancies and will ensure that the requests to alter working hours from all staff are dealt with appropriately;
- Any redundancy criteria and procedures are monitored to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any employee.

4. TRAINING

SHCA will ensure that all managers and supervisors with responsibility for any staff and their development are provided with the appropriate equality and diversity training where necessary which may be updated on a regular basis as required. Other staff will also be required to attend equality and diversity training.

5. MONITORING

SHCA has designated the Centre manager as the person with responsibility for ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Policy is monitored and implemented effectively. All policies and procedures will be implemented and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure legal compliance and best practice with regard to equality, in line with SHCA Policy on Policies. The manager will also be responsible for monitoring how the policy is working in practice as this is critical to ensure that equality is being delivered in the workplace.

The purpose of monitoring is to review the effectiveness of the policies and action plan and involves gathering individual personal information on the diversity of our existing staff and any potential recruits.

It also enables SHCA to compare and analyse this information against jobseekers in the local community, the broader national labour market and other groups of employees within the organisation.

The type of information collected shall be based around current UK equality legislation.

SHCA will not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be taken seriously, fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.