

Buckinghamshire Community Wellbeing (BCW) Hub			
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement and Aims

As an organisation, Buckinghamshire Community Wellbeing (BCW) Hub values the variety of different views, outlooks and approaches that a diverse workforce and community bring. This assists BCW Hub to improve services and increase our understanding of its service users, employees and trustees.

BCW Hub will do everything to ensure no one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

BCW Hub recognises and values people's differences and will assist them to use their talents to reach their full potential.

Regarding employment, BCW Hub will do all it can to ensure it recruits, trains and promotes people based on qualifications, experience and abilities for all roles within the organisation. **Please see related HR policy.**

This policy is designed to ensure that BCW Hub complies with its obligations under equality legislation and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.

BCW Hub is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics, which are defined as:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

We also commit to extend these characteristics to:

- part-time or fixed term employment status
- immigration status / residency status
- socio-economic background
- parental responsibilities.

The policy is underpinned by adherence to the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999 (EU Parental Leave Directive 2010).

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees and learners, partners, service providers and service users engaged with the Hub's activities.

Responsibility

All members of staff, trustees and volunteers have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed and to draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

All staff, volunteers and trustees are made aware of their day-to-day responsibilities under this policy when they join BCW Hub and training is provided where individuals require it.

The Chair of the Trustees and the Hub Manager are responsible for promoting awareness of the policy and monitoring that it is being followed.

Breaches of this policy or unlawful discrimination by employees will be treated as a disciplinary offence which may result in disciplinary action as laid out in the BCW Hub HR policy.

Breaches of this policy or unlawful discrimination by volunteers, including trustees will be treated as a disciplinary offence and may result in their position with BCW Hub being withdrawn.

Employees, trustees and volunteers are also personally liable under equality legislation for any act of unlawful discrimination.

BCW Hub expect all partners and service providers to provide non-discriminatory services and operate under the Equality Act 2010. Any reported issues will be reported through their organisation's channels.

The BCW Hub Manager is responsible for ensuring all learners and service users receive equitable access to the Hub and its provision. Any concerns raised will be dealt with as per the charity's complaint procedure.

Governance

BCW Hub expects its management and governance to benefit from a wide range of opinions, experience and beliefs. BCW Hub ensures that:

- Recruitment of members to the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers is done on the basis of the skills required, irrespective of a particular protected characteristic.
- Diversity is taken into consideration when recruiting members to the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers.
- Policies and strategies recommended to the Board of Trustees comply with our stated commitment to diversity and equal opportunities.
- Strategies to broaden diversity among trustees, staff and volunteers and are promoted wherever possible.

Employment

Please see BCW Hub HR policy regarding recruitment and terms and conditions of employment, as per the Joint Working Agreement with Buckinghamshire New University and Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust to host BCW Hub staff.

BCW Hub's aim is to recruit the best person for the job, to make full use of the talents and resources of all its employees, volunteers and trustees, and to support and develop all in an environment free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment, in which all are treated with dignity and respect.

BCW Hub recognises that flexibility regarding working patterns will assist the broadest range of people to work for the charity. BCW Hub will consider all reasonable requests for non-standard working patterns unless there is objective justification after careful consideration.

Training, career development and promotion

All employees will be provided with the appropriate training, according to business need, to enable them to improve their performance and to achieve the performance standards and targets set for them by BCW Hub.

BCW Hub will also ensure that opportunities for training and career development are made equally available to all employees regardless of the length of service or the number of hours worked. BCW Hub will take steps to ensure that those who have caring responsibilities are able to access training and development opportunities that involve time outside the usual working day.

Promotion within BCW Hub is based on merit and the reasonable requirements of the job regardless of having a particular characteristic.

Disability code of good practice

BCW Hub values the individual contribution of employees, prospective employees and volunteers from all sectors of the community. The charity is committed to facilitating the employment of disabled individuals wherever practicable and to achieve this BCW Hub operates the following code of good practice:

- BCW Hub will take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment, working practices and terms and conditions of employment do not prevent disabled people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified and the best person for the job.
- BCW Hub will bear in mind the desirability of avoiding barriers to the employment of disabled people when acquiring and fitting out buildings with equipment and devising working practices.
- BCW Hub will make reasonable adjustments to recruitment arrangements, to the working environment, to working practices and to terms and conditions of employment to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.
- A decision not to make an adjustment which might enable or assist an employee or a prospective employee to be employed in a particular post will not be taken below the level of Hub Manager. Before making such a decision, the Hub Manager will ensure that all possible adjustments have been fully investigated, including carrying out consultation with the employee or prospective employee concerned and taking any appropriate expert advice. This may include discussion with any host employer organisations.
- Any employee who becomes disabled whilst in employment, will be given full support to continue in their own job where practicable and having put in place any reasonable adjustments, or to move to an alternative job appropriate to their experience and abilities if available.
- BCW Hub will encourage the participation of disabled employees to ensure that, wherever possible, its employment practices recognise and meet their needs and will consult disabled employees on action to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work.
- Further guidance can be obtained on an entirely confidential basis from the Hub Manager. If an employee knows or believes they may be disabled, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Hub Manager so that BCW Hub can ensure they achieve their full potential and that the organisation complies with its duties under the law.

The Hub will commit these values to the recruitment and support available to any disabled volunteers or students on placement.

BCW Hub will also ensure service provided at the Hub are as accessible as possible, and support service provider and partners with implementing any reasonable adjustments.

Publicity

BCW Hub tries to ensure that in all its communications it reflects the mix and diversity of its activities and beneficiaries.

BCW Hub ensures that publicity about the availability of services is accessible to as wide an audience as possible and that appropriate means of communication are used to reach those communities less likely to have access to traditional means of communication.

BCW Hub ensures that publications reflect the diversity of activities and beneficiaries supported and are attractive to all sections of the community. Written communications are written in plain and jargon free language.

Implementation of the policy

All staff and trustees will be involved in creating an environment of equality and one that values diversity.

Communications

BCW Hub ensures that the policy is communicated to job applicants and employees through:

- Making a copy of the policy available to all prospective applicants
- Ensuring the policy is discussed with all new starters as part of the induction process
- Providing Equality and Diversity training and guidance to employees and trustees if required

- Including reference to abiding by the policy in the Employee Terms and Conditions and Hub Handbook

This policy will be made available on our website for service users to access.

Working in Partnerships

BCW Hub ensures that when selecting the partnerships the charity works in, it considers their commitment to Equality and Diversity through:

- Requesting to see their policy if necessary
- Discussing their practice including monitoring the policy if necessary
- Users of our service

BCW Hub ensures that its services are made accessible through:

- Using a wide range of social media platforms.
- Written promotional material and application forms being in appropriate, plain English and jargon free.

Monitoring the Policy

BCW Hub is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of this diversity and equal opportunities policy. All aspects of policies, procedures and practices in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, training, career development, promotion and grievance and discipline to identify any trends or patterns emerging are reviewed annually. BCW Hub is committed to identifying and taking all steps necessary to eliminate any unjustified discrimination which is revealed by this monitoring process. Recommendations for change are agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Reporting discrimination

Employees who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should, in the first instance, raise the issue with the Hub Manager or where the Hub Manager is implicated, to the Chair of Trustees. All employees will be entitled to follow the Grievance Procedure as set out in the BCW Hub HR Policy.

Service users who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should, in the first instance, raise the issue with the Hub Manager or where the Hub Manager is implicated, to the Chair of Trustees when the BCW Hub Complaints Policy will be followed.

Employees, volunteers, student, trustees and service users should also use this approach if they feel that they have been the subject of harassment from someone who is not an employee of BCW Hub. BCW Hub will not tolerate any harassment from third parties towards its employees and service users and will take appropriate action to prevent it happening again.

If an employee, volunteer, students, trustee or service user witnesses behaviour that they find offensive, even if it is not directed at them, they should also use this procedure.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Direct discrimination is when someone is treated less favourably than someone else because of a particular protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination happens when a policy, rule, or way of working that applies to everyone puts people from a particular group at a disadvantage compared with others. This can happen even when the impact is unintentional.

Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless the organisation can show that the policy is genuinely necessary for the way it operates and that there is no fairer or less discriminatory way to achieve the same aim.

Discrimination arising from disability happens when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability, and the organisation cannot show a legitimate and proportionate reason for doing so. This protection applies only when the charity knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person is disabled.

Associative discrimination is when someone has been treated unfairly because they are associated with someone with a particular protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is when someone has been treated unfairly because there has been an assumption that they have a particular protected characteristic. This applies even if the person does not possess the characteristic.

Harassment is a form of direct discrimination. It can be defined as unwanted or unwelcome behaviour which causes discomfort or upset to an individual and which has an adverse effect on working relationships. It creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating work environment for the individual.

Victimisation is when a person is treated less favourably than another when they have made allegations, brought proceedings, given evidence or complained about the behaviour of someone who has been harassing or discriminating against them or others.

Failure to make adjustments is if BCW Hub's premises or equipment, working arrangements or services put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage and BCW Hub does not try to make any reasonable adjustment which removes or minimises that effect. This then becomes unlawful discrimination.