Tom Harrison House
"Honour, Hope, Healing"

Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality Act 2010

Tom Harrison House recognises that addiction can affect anyone regardless of their background, age, health, vaccination status, race, ethnicity, colour, class, gender, religion, beliefs, marital status or sexual orientation. The charity, therefore, wishes to encourage a diverse workforce that is representative of all sections of society recognising that such a workforce is best placed to support clients.

The charity aims to create a working environment in which:

- all people are respected and able to give of their best.
- there is no bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- decisions, such as salary increases and progression, are based on merit.

The purpose of this policy, therefore, is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on the unlawful grounds of gender, marital status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or philosophical belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy maternity, vaccination status, health or age. The charity opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

The charity expects employees to value the diversity that exists within the workforce and its clients, to respect differences and try to understand other people's perspectives. For this policy to be successful it is essential that everyone is committed to, and involved in, its delivery.

The policy applies to all workers including full-time employees, bank staff, counsellors in training, clinical, social work and student placements, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, sessional workers and other self-employed people.

The charity is committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued provided these are aligned to the charity's aims, values and service.

- Providing a working environment that promotes dignity and respect and is free from bullying, intimidation and harassment.

- Ensuring that training, development and progression opportunities are available to all workers regardless of background.

- Recognising that equality and diversity in the workplace is good management practice, makes sound business sense and improves the quality of our service.

- Treating breaches of the equality policy as misconduct and taking disciplinary action where it is right to do so.

- Senior managers giving support to this policy.
- Reviewing its employment practices and policies to ensure they comply with this policy, are fair, free of bias and do not discriminate unlawfully either intentionally or unintentionally.
- Becoming an employer of choice by promoting and developing policies that support a work-life balance, equal pay and ensuring that the Charity maximises employment opportunities for all.
- Recruiting employees in a manner that is fair and open.
- Ensuring that employees are aware of their personal responsibility to apply this policy.
- Ensuring that managers and leaders undertake training in equal opportunity issues to raise their awareness, knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity in the work place and in service delivery.

Managers' responsibilities

Managers must:

Demonstrate commitment to equal opportunities and diversity by incorporating it into service, business and team plans.

Take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy within departmental plans/objectives.

Ensure that the equal opportunity and diversity policy plans are communicated to workers, and allow for discussion and feedback.

Ensure that workers understand their responsibilities, and that any form of unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated and will be treated as a serious misconduct which may lead to dismissal.

Effectively manage, and deal promptly and thoroughly with, complaints of inequality, discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying.

Consider their actions and ensure that there is no scope for inequitable practices. Ensure fairness and equality of treatment in all employment practices, for example, assessing the performance and potential of any individual on merit.

Employees' responsibilities

Whilst the responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination and inequality in the workplace rests with managers, the attitudes of employees are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. Employees must:

- Ensure that they understand this policy and are clear about its implications, which is that any breach of the policy will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action not excluding the sanction of dismissal.

- Ensure that they do not discriminate in any matter of employment or service provision/delivery by treating all individuals or groups fairly and respectfully.

- Not harass abuse, intimidate or victimise other employees or clients.

- Not induce, or attempt to induce, other employees to discriminate against, harass, intimidate or victimise other employees or clients.

- Take appropriate action if there are apparent breaches of the policy by informing their manager or other available senior member of staff.

Recruitment

Recruitment selection decisions will be made based on ability, skill, experience, knowledge and motivation.

For some positions the charity will seek to recruit people who are 'in recovery' from an addiction.

The prime motivation for this will be because the role can be better performed by someone who has personal experience of recovery from addiction, for example, roles which require the job holder to motivate or engage others in recovery. In these circumstances being 'in recovery' will be included in the selection criteria - usually as a desirable rather than an essential - and will be stated on marketing materials such as job ads.

The charity will carry out equal opportunities monitoring as part of its recruitment process and candidates will be asked to provide relevant information. This information will not be seen by those involved in making selection decisions and will be retained anonymously and used solely for monitoring purposes.

On occasions some vacancies will only be advertised internally, and it will be made clear that external applicants cannot apply. External applicants will include volunteers, students on placement with the charity and other self-employed workers.

On other occasions, both external and internal applicants will be sought. In these circumstances vacancies will not be advertised externally without internal applicants being offered the opportunity to apply at the same time. Where a vacancy is advertised both internally and externally, internal applicants will be considered alongside external applicants and will be assessed against the same criteria.

Under discrimination legislation relating to sex, race, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation, an employer can discriminate in recruitment, transfers, training or dismissal if the employer is able to prove that a genuine occupational requirement ("GOR"). For some positions within the charity there is a requirement to recruit employees with certain characteristics. Where such situations arise the charity will only restrict recruitment where there is a legal right to do so, and will make this clear in marketing materials such as job advertisements. The need for a genuine occupational requirement will be re-considered on each occasion a vacancy arises and the restriction will only be applied where there is a clear, lawful, reasonable and proportionate need to do so.

The charity wishes to carry out good practice recruitment, and to this end staff will manage the recruitment process to ensure independence and to advise and guide those involved in interviews and other selection methods used. Good practice selection methodologies will be used including job descriptions, person specifications, selection criteria, processes for the weighing and judging of evidence. Notes and records of selection decisions will be made and retained.

Disability

The charity wishes to support, to the extent that it can, the employment of those with disabilities.

The charity will take such actions as it can to enable disabled applicants to fully participate in the recruitment process and will make reasonable adjustments, wherever possible, to enable the employment and redeployment of staff with disabilities.

Promotion, progression and salary increases

The charity will make decisions about promotion, progression and salary increases and/or bonuses based on criteria free from unlawful discrimination.

The charity wishes to have processes that are transparent, rigorous and fair, and that stand up to objective scrutiny.

The charity will ensure that its pay structures reward employees fairly and that its processes provide compliance with equal pay legislation.

Training and development

The charity will ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination in the provision of training and development so that employees can realise their potential and contribute fully.

Employees must be given fair access to training opportunities and be selected for training and development on lawful grounds. Managers should exercise care to ensure that training events, such as team meetings, are not scheduled in such a way to prevent part-time or those with child-care responsibilities from attending.

Flexible working and work-life balance

The charity has family friendly policies to support working parents and those with elder care responsibilities, as well as specific entitlements for Military Reservists and others with Armed Forces commitments (see the Employment of Reservists policy document). For other employees without such responsibilities the charity will give due consideration to requests for flexible working arrangements and will try to meet the employee's needs provided service provision is maintained.

Equal opportunity monitoring and the diversity census

The charity states its intention not to discriminate unlawfully and to encourage diversity in the workplace and consequently undertakes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the charity. Accordingly, monitoring systems and evaluation techniques are used to measure the effectiveness of the policy and practices and action will be taken to address any inequalities that are apparent. The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you feel you are being treated unfairly

If you believe you are being treated unfairly you should discuss this with your manager or other senior staff member as appropriate.

The website www.acas.org.uk is a useful source of free and impartial information, or you may wish to phone the ACAS helpline on 0300 123 1150 for direct employment advice.