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An open door for groups needing equipment and information

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Equalities Policy

This policy and the way in which it operates will be reviewed every 2 years.

The policy was reviewed in July 2005.

Signature

Chair of Management Committee

Date

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Resource Centre recognises the existence of discrimination against people because of particular characteristics or beliefs. This policy sets out the steps taken by the Resource Centre to prevent discrimination in the services it provides and in employment.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The Resource Centre Equalities Policy aims to prevent direct and indirect discrimination.
- 2.2 **Direct Discrimination** is treating a person less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of age, disability, race (including colour, ethnic origin or nationality), gender, responsibility for dependants, sexuality, religion, marital status or HIV/AIDS status.
- 2.3 **Indirect Discrimination** is an unjustifiable requirement or condition which appears to apply equally to everyone but which has a discriminatory effect on people from a particular group.
- 2.4 The policy also covers **harassment**, which is defined as any uninvited, unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour which is offensive to the person involved and causes that person to feel threatened, humiliated or embarrassed.

3. Scope

- 3.1 It is a condition of employment that all workers at the Resource Centre understand, comply with and implement this policy.
- 3.2 All workers are responsible for making every effort to prevent direct and indirect discrimination at the Centre, and for ensuring that the Centre is equally accessible to groups and individuals from all communities.
- 3.3 Workers must not:
- discriminate against other workers or members of the public
 - encourage others to practice discrimination
 - harass, abuse or victimise other workers or members of the public.

4. Providing an equal service

4.1 Respect for diversity

- 4.1.1 The Resource Centre exists to provide a service to community groups. Users of the Centre are therefore drawn from a wide variety of communities present in Brighton and Hove. Workers at the Resource Centre will ensure that they treat all users of the Centre with respect and dignity. Where users have particular needs, workers will do everything possible to meet these needs.

4.2 Publicity and written materials

- 4.2.1 The Resource Centre's publicity is distributed regularly to community groups in Brighton and Hove. Special mailings are sent to particular areas (for example ethnic minority groups, schools, women's groups.)
- 4.2.2 All Centre publicity materials and information are written in plain English, and are designed to be easy to read.

4.3 Access to services

- 4.3.1 The Resource Centre is fully accessible to people in wheelchairs with a ramped entrance, wide doorways and passages throughout, and an accessible toilet. The public areas of the Centre are all on the ground floor and there are no changes of level.
- 4.3.2 The Centre has an induction loop available for discussions or training sessions with people using hearing aids. We also have a portable infra-red hearing system and a portable induction loop which are available for groups to hire and which can be set up in other parts of the Centre when necessary.
- 4.3.3 Resource Centre publications and publicity materials are available in large print, on disk, on tape, or in Braille, on request. There is a magnifying lens in the Centre's information library.
- 4.3.4 Centre workers are committed to offering services in a manner appropriate to the needs and abilities of each individual Centre user.
- 4.3.5 As a matter of policy, prices at the Centre are kept as low as possible, in order to make the resources accessible to as many groups as possible.
- 4.3.6 We are committed to making the content of our website as accessible to as many people as possible. We have achieved WAI Level 2 accessibility, a set of guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium.

4.4 Training

- 4.4.1 The Resource Centre offers training to members of community groups in the use of equipment in the Centre. This is empowering for people who have been excluded from access to computers and reprographic equipment because of discrimination.
- 4.4.2 For groups run by and for disabled people and groups based in the Centre's priority areas, we offer a training and support package including tailored one-to-one training in the use of equipment at the Centre, together with any additional support needed to enable the group to pursue their aims on an equal basis with other groups.

5. Equality in employment

- 5.1 The Resource Centre intends to ensure that equality in employment becomes a reality in practice and not just a paper commitment. No job applicant or worker will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, race, (including colour, ethnic origin or nationality), gender, responsibility for dependants, sexuality, religion, marital status or HIV/AIDS status.

5.2 Recruitment

- 5.2.1 Vacancies are advertised through notices and leaflets in centres used by community groups in Brighton and Hove, through the Community Information Bulletin, through mailings to ethnic minority groups and through advertisements in the local press.
- 5.2.2 Job applicants are given information about the access details of the building, and are offered any assistance necessary in attending an interview, if shortlisted.

5.3 Employment

- 5.3.1 All workers at the Resource Centre are paid at an equal rate.
- 5.3.2 Rates of pay and employment benefits available to workers are limited by the level of funding received by the Centre. Security of employment is also severely restricted because funding is allocated annually.
- 5.3.3 Staff training is planned and implemented with the aim of achieving equal levels of skill and knowledge among Resource Centre workers.
- 5.3.4 The Resource Centre's sickness policy states that workers will receive their full rate of pay for up to 3 months of sickness in any one tax year. Arrangements for additional paid sick leave, unpaid leave, accumulated annual leave, maternity leave, maternity support leave and dependant care leave are made on a case by case basis, within an overall framework of aiming for equality for all workers while accepting the need to keep the Centre running.

6. Harassment

- 6.1 Any worker who harasses any other worker or any user of the Centre will be automatically dismissed, with a right to appeal under the Centre's grievance procedure. Harassment is defined above; it includes but is not limited to:
- abusive language, including sexist, racist, homophobic, or other bigoted jokes
 - offensive gestures or comments
 - unwanted physical contact or abuse
 - open hostility towards an individual
 - humiliating, intimidating or patronising behaviour
 - displaying sexist, racist, homophobic, or other bigoted material, including graffiti
 - requests for sexual favours

7. Monitoring

- 7.1 Staff recruitment and selection is monitored by means of a confidential Equal Opportunities Monitoring form (copy attached). Great care is taken to ensure that these forms are separated from the application forms as soon as they are received. The monitoring forms are used for statistical analysis only, and form no part of the selection process.
- 7.2 Every 2 years in our User Satisfaction survey, we ask each group in the sample to classify its main activities under headings such as *Provide services to a faith or minority ethnic community* and *Work to improve your local area or neighbourhood*. In addition, each use of the Centre by a community group is recorded. This information is used to plan services and target publicity.