



A really useful place for community groups

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Equalities policy

This is the Equalities Policy of Brighton & Hove Social Welfare & Educational Trust Ltd.

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

The policy was reviewed in November 2018.

Signed:

Date:

Director of B&H SWET Ltd (the employer)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Resource Centre recognises the existence of discrimination against people based on 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, indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination**.
 - 2.1.1. **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 reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependants (including pregnancy and maternity), religion/belief, marital status or HIV/AIDS status (all these will be described as *protected characteristics* in this document from this point onwards).
 - 2.1.2. **Indirect Discrimination** is an unjustifiable requirement or condition which appears to apply equally to everyone but which has a discriminatory effect on people who possess protected characteristic.
 - 2.1.3. **Associative Discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
 - 2.1.4. **Perceptive Discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because others *think* they possess a protected characteristic.
- 2.2. The policy also covers harassment, third-party harassment and victimisation.
 - 2.2.1. **Harassment** is defined as any uninvited, unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour which is offensive to a person (even if it is not directed at them) and causes that person to feel threatened, intimidated, humiliated or embarrassed or creates an environment which is hostile or offensive to that person.
 - 2.2.2. **Third-party harassment** is defined as harassment by people other than workers at the Resource Centre (e.g. members of the public, suppliers, Centre users).
 - 2.2.3. **Victimisation** is defined as harassment that occurs as a result of a worker or service user making or supporting a complaint, or raising a grievance, or because they are suspected of having done so.

3. Scope

- 3.1. It is a condition of employment that every member of staff understands, complies with and implements this policy.
- 3.2. All staff are responsible for making every effort to prevent all types of discrimination at the Centre, and for ensuring that the Centre is equally accessible to groups and individuals from all communities.
- 3.3. Staff must not:
 - 3.3.1. discriminate against other staff or users of the Centre
 - 3.3.2. encourage others to practise discrimination
 - 3.3.3. harass, abuse or victimise other staff 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 are therefore drawn from a wide variety of communities present in Brighton and Hove and Sussex. Staff will ensure that they treat all users with respect and dignity. Where users have particular needs, we will do everything possible to meet these needs.
 - 4.1.2. In addition, the Resource Centre offers an extended and more intensive service to groups based in communities where access to resources are restricted. These groups are called 'priority groups' and consist of those based in areas of social housing, run by local residents, groups run by disabled people, and black and minority ethnic groups.
- 4.2. Publicity and written materials
 - 4.2.1. The Resource Centre's publicity is distributed to community groups in Brighton and Hove, and online using social media. Special mailings are sent to particular groups (for example, priority groups).
 - 4.2.2. Our publicity materials are written in plain English and are designed to be easy to read.
- 4.3. Access to services
 - 4.3.1. Our premises are fully accessible to wheelchair users with a ramped entrance, wide doorways and passages throughout, and an accessible toilet. The public areas are all on the ground floor and there are no changes of level.
 - 4.3.2. We have a portable infra-red hearing system and a portable induction loop for use at meetings or training sessions where people are using hearing aids. The equipment is available for groups to hire or can be set up in the Centre when required.
 - 4.3.3. Our publications and publicity materials are available in large print, as audio recordings, or in Braille, on request. There is a magnifying lens in our information library.
 - 4.3.4. Our publications are written in plain English. We will arrange for any publication to be translated into another language if requested by a user group.
 - 4.3.5. We are committed to offering services in a manner appropriate to the needs and abilities of each individual user.
 - 4.3.6. As a matter of policy, prices are kept as low as possible, in order to make the resources accessible to as many groups as possible. We also offer a discount on prices to our members, who are made up of our priority groups, as part of our extended service to those groups.
 - 4.3.7. We are committed to making the content of our website as accessible to as many people as we can by ensuring that it is compatible with screen readers wherever possible.
- 4.4. Training
 - 4.4.1. We offer training to members of any community group in the use of printing and finishing equipment in the Centre. This is empowering for people who have been excluded from access to computers and reprographic equipment because of discrimination or other factors disadvantaging them from accessing services.
 - 4.4.2. We offer a detailed training and support package to priority groups. This includes tailored one-to-one training in the use of equipment at the Centre, together with any additional intensive support needed to enable the group to pursue its aims on an equal basis with other groups.

5. Equality in employment

5.1. We intend to ensure equality in employment. No job applicant or member of staff will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic that they might have.

5.2. Recruitment

5.2.1. Vacancies are advertised through notices and leaflets in centres used by community groups in Brighton and Hove, on our website and through advertisements in the local press, and through notices on email listings which are accessed by other community and voluntary organisations in the city.

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 staff at the Resource Centre are paid at an equal hourly rate. Rates of pay and employment benefits available to staff are limited by the level of funding received by the Centre.

5.3.2. Staff training is planned and implemented with the aim of achieving equal levels of skill and knowledge among Resource Centre staff.

5.3.3. The Centre's sickness policy states that staff will receive their full rate of pay for up to 28 weeks of sickness in any one tax year. Arrangements for additional paid sick leave, unpaid leave, accumulated annual leave, maternity/paternity leave, dependent care leave and carer's non-standard work patterns are made on a case by case basis, within an overall framework of aiming for equality for all staff while accepting the need to keep the Centre running.

6. Harassment

6.1. Any member of staff who harasses another member or any user of the Centre, or behaves in a way which creates an offensive and hostile environment for a member or user of the Centre, will be automatically dismissed, with a right to appeal under the grievance procedure.

6.2. Harassment includes (but is not limited to)

6.2.1. abusive language, including sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or other bigoted jokes

6.2.2. unwanted physical contact

6.2.3. displaying sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or other bigoted material, including graffiti

6.2.4. requests for sexual favours

6.3. Third-party harassment: the Resource Centre will take steps to ensure that members of staff are protected from harassment from third parties (such as suppliers, members of the public, Centre users), as soon as such behaviour is reported to another member of staff, or if it is witnessed by another member of staff.

6.4. Victimisation: the Resource Centre will ensure that members of staff do not treat another member of staff or service user badly because they have made a complaint or raised a grievance, or supported another member of staff who has.

7. Monitoring

- 7.1. Staff recruitment and selection is monitored by means of a confidential Equal Opportunities Monitoring form. 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 two years in our User Satisfaction survey, we ask each group in the sample the nature of the group's aims and activities by asking 'What does your group do?'. In addition, each use of the Centre by a community group is recorded, with details of the group and the service used. This information is used to plan services and target publicity.