

THE BRIDGES COMMUNITY TRUST

P17: Equality and Diversity Policy



YOUR POTENTIAL REALISED

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Trust recognises that many individuals and communities experience unlawful and unfair discrimination for various reasons including their gender, relationship or marital status, race or ethnicity, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic background, accent, education, HIV status, language, background, faith or religious belief, physical appearance and political opinions.
- 1.2 We celebrate the diversity of society and are striving to promote and reflect that diversity within this organisation. Diversity consists of visible and non-visible factors, which include personal characteristics such as sex, race, age, background, culture, disability, personality and work-style. Harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, their talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are met.

2. Our Commitment

We want to create an environment that:

- ✓ Promotes fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- ✓ Promotes dignity and respect for all.
- ✓ Recognises and values individual differences and the contributions of all.
- ✓ Treats people fairly and according to their needs.
- ✓ Actively seeks to prevent and challenge intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- ✓ Enables individuals to feel valued, included and able to access us.
- ✓ Ensures that all our staff have a positive experience.

3. Key Drivers for Our Policy

- 3.1 The policy underpins two key drivers for equality and diversity:

- ✓ Social Responsibility
- ✓ Our legal obligations

- 3.2 Core Business Benefits:

This Equality and Diversity Policy's approach is based on harnessing the rich diversity of cultures, opinions, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds found in the local Community. Many organisations recognise the business benefits of diversity and developing a culture in which all individuals are valued for the difference that they bring. The richness of difference being valued enables individuals from a range of backgrounds to contribute towards the delivery of an organisation's core business activity.

- 3.3 Social Responsibility:

Disadvantaging any person or group because of gender, race, age, disability, sexuality, religion, or other factors is totally unacceptable and the promotion of equality is an attempt to take action on eliminating inequality and promoting equal access to employment opportunities and services. Employers and service providers have a social and moral responsibility to ensure that they eliminate all forms of discrimination and to promote equality.

3.4 Our legal obligations

3.4.1 The Equality Act 2010 has simplified anti-discrimination laws by having a single Equality Act. This makes it easier for people to understand and comply with the law. The 2010 Act has also strengthened protection in some situations. The Act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

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

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to treat someone differently, through direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation and by failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

3.4.2 The foundation of any Equality and Diversity Policy should go beyond legislative requirements and include types of discrimination not currently covered by law as compliance with legislation is not an inclusive approach for any organisation in modern society.

4. Who is covered by our Policy

Our Equality and Diversity Policy covers:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Management Board Members
- Service Users
- Visitors
- Partner Organisations

5. The Bridges Community Trust commitment in practice

When we deliver services we will aim to:

- ✓ Ensure that our services are relevant and take different needs into account
- ✓ Provide information that is clear, accurate and accessible
- ✓ Ensure customers receive a quality service but recognise their different needs
- ✓ Respond to, investigate and take appropriate action to address complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation
- ✓ Monitor what we do, analyse gaps, identify barriers and make reasonable adjustments to take individual needs into account
- ✓ Have high levels of satisfaction from those using our service

As an employer we will aim to:

- ✓ Recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Meadows
- ✓ Welcome the contribution made by the experience, knowledge and skills that a diverse workforce brings
- ✓ Make workplace adjustments in all instances where this is reasonable
- ✓ Provide training and development for our staff
- ✓ Provide an environment free from harassment, discrimination, victimisation and bullying
- ✓ Promote dignity and respect and provide an environment of mutual trust
- ✓ Listen to staff suggestions for improving our services and ways of working
- ✓ Work flexibly to help staff to balance their work and personal commitments, reduce stress, absenteeism and to achieve their full potential

6. Rights and Responsibilities

Our Equality and Diversity Policy enshrines the following rights and responsibilities:

Rights	Responsibilities
To be treated fairly in recruitment, employment, training and promotion.	To implement our Equality and Diversity Policy.
To be treated fairly and respectfully by the people we provide a service to.	To report any suspected or actual discriminatory actions or practice.
Not to be harassed, bullied, intimidated and victimised by other employees, volunteers, or service users because of background	Not to discriminate against anyone in recruitment, employment, training or promotion.
To refuse an instruction or pressure to discriminate against any other individual.	Not to harass, bully, intimidate and victimise other employees, volunteers or service users because of their background
Not to be victimised because you have made a complaint, intend to make a complaint or have provided information relating to a complaint.	Not to instruct or put pressure to discriminate against any other individual.
To make a complaint and to have your complaint investigated.	Not to victimise people because they have made a complaint, intend to make a complaint or have provided information relating to a complaint
To received training on equality and diversity.	To take any complaint of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation seriously.

7. Policy Governance, Monitoring and Review

7.1 Lead Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Board. The Finance and Operations Manager has the lead responsibility for the day to day operation of this policy; the provisions of this policy bind all employees and volunteers.

7.2 Training

We will provide equality and diversity training to all board members, employees and volunteers.

7.3 Communications

We will ensure that the Policy is communicated to all board members, employees, volunteers, partner organisations and customers.

7.4 Monitoring

We will undertake equality monitoring and produce regular monitoring reports for the Board.

7.5 Evaluation and Review

We will welcome customer, employee and volunteer feedback on the effectiveness of our Equality and Diversity Policy, which will be annually reviewed.