The Enterprise Centre

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

A POLICY FOR EQUALITY

Statement of Intent

THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE is committed to developing an effective Equal Opportunities policy which promotes a caring and welcoming atmosphere, so that all individuals can recognize and achieve their full potential.

As a Centre for developing communities, as well as an employer, THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination for all peoples. The policy has been developed to ensure that the Centre and any service that it provides is free from discrimination and that everyone is treated with equal concern. Any instance of discrimination will be dealt with efficiently and sensitively. Positive attitudes are promoted within the Centre.

Our policy is written within the framework and guidance of the following legislation:

Equal Pay Act 1970

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Race Relations Act 1976

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all peoples regardless of their gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, social background, age, marital status, those with HIV/AIDS and any other marginalized group.

Positive Action
The Centre aims to be welcoming to everyone with the hope that all volunteers, members and employees will take responsibility to encourage this. As a Centre for developing communities we would also hope to encourage people to be aware of different perspectives and backgrounds and to be willing to learn from each other.

To ensure that a welcoming and caring attitude is maintained particular consideration should be made to the following:

- that cultural events, where appropriate, are open to everyone.
- that when events are open to everyone that different dietary needs are respected.
- that any refurbishment, alteration or development of the Centre should be fully accessible to all members of the community.
- that any new equipment, fittings or furnishings consider cultural and ability needs.
- that signs, posters and literature produced by or distributed by the Centre be translated wherever possible and be culturally appropriate.

This list is not exhaustive. The review process of this policy should include the points raised in this list and be added to as the Centre develops.

Trainees, Volunteers and Members of THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE
THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE works to promote an environment where all members, regardless of their background are encouraged and enabled to have equality of opportunity within the Centre. The Centre wishes, wherever possible, to recognise the particular needs of marginalised groups.

If a member or volunteer should feel at any time that they are not receiving equal or fair treatment they should in the first instance discuss the matter with any member of staff they feel able to approach. The procedure for dealing with harassment and discrimination will then be followed.

Staffing
Staff employed in the Centre should wherever possible reflect the ethnicity of the local community and be able to demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity for all the members, volunteers and staff members of the Centre.

Recruitment and Selection

Advertising
We are aware that the open job market highlights discrimination of certain groups who have not been encouraged to enter, or been confident of success, in finding employment.

Advertisements for posts should state the most basic minimum requirements both in terms of qualifications and experience. It should also state, in appropriate words, that the organisation intends to treat all applicants equally without prejudice.

Advertisements will be placed where it is felt they will reach the maximum number of interested people. This will include the mainstream and specialist press as appropriate. As a community organisation we recognise the particular skills that people with local knowledge would be able to bring to the job. Recruitment advertisements should also be placed in local publications to ensure that local residents are aware of any vacancies.

In accordance with the specific duties for some posts it may be appropriate for the Centre to actively recruit members of staff from ethnic minority communities or with a disability. This should take into consideration any relevant legislation (e.g. Section 5 of the Race Relations Act and Section 7 of the Sex Discrimination Act).

We are aware that word of mouth advertising is often a way of perpetuating inequality, and THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE will not use such a means for advertising for permanent staff except as a supplement to the above.

Applications, Shortlisting and Interviewing Procedures
THE ENTERPRISE CENRE is aware that the process of application, shortlisting and interviewing is an alienating experience for many people. We are committed, therefore, to adopt a process of recruitment that does not discourage people from applying. In recruitment, assumptions will not be made about applicant's abilities based on personal information not relevant to the demands of the job.

The recruitment panel will be representative of differing backgrounds as possible, bearing in mind the need to keep the panel to a workable size. The recruitment should ideally approve the job description and person specification before it is circulated. The person specification to form the terms of reference when shortlisting for interview. Clear information should be sent in the recruitment pack to all applicants to ensure that they are aware that the person specification will be used by the recruitment panel to determine the short list and ultimate selection for the post. The same panel should therefore meet to agree the short list and then to carry out the interviews. It is also the responsibility of the

recruitment panel to put the interviewees at their ease and enable them to give the best possible performance during the interview.

Conditions of Service
We recognise that the commitment that THE ENTERPRISE CENRE makes to being an Equal Opportunities organisation do not stop at the appointment of staff, but should follow through the entire relationship between the employer and the employee; they should relate to the way that employment comes about, the position of the employee in relation to management, to colleagues, to service users and to the job itself.

Staff and Volunteer Training
THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE recognizes the importance of continually improving the skills and abilities of its employees and volunteers.

Training should be offered and encouraged to all employees in order to achieve the all round development of the organisation. Through individual supervision, individuals should be supported in recognising their own training needs. Course fees and travel expenses, if agreed by management, should be paid. The Centre aims to offer a minimum of 6 training days per year. this will be reviewed within our monitoring service annually.

THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE will encourage all employees to undertake training in the following as essential to their working role:

1. Health and Safety
2. Fire Evacuation
3. First Aid
4. Safeguarding
5. Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities Training
All volunteers, members and employees of THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE will be encouraged and supported in working with the Equal Opportunities policy. As every individual should reflect the ethos, attitude and philosophy of the Centre, we will all strive to ensure that the environment is free from any form of harassment and discrimination.

All staff should be encouraged to undergo training to develop an understanding of equal opportunities and discriminatory practices in the work setting. It is the duty of all employees to recognise these training needs and to teach and support others in the understanding on an every day basis.

Harassment and Discrimination

The Enterprise Centre is opposed to harassment and discrimination in any form and is committed to providing an environment in which the dignity of all individuals is respected.

Any individual, employee, volunteer or member of the Centre who feel they are being subjected to harassment or discrimination of any kind are encouraged and have the right to discuss the issues with any member of staff, whom they feel most approachable for their own needs. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue on an informal basis whilst taking the situation or allegations seriously.

If the issues cannot be resolved in an informal way or, the complainant is not satisfied, the issues will be taken to the Senior Staff Group who will further attempt to resolve the situation informally. If this is not possible the following procedure will be implemented:

1. A written statement will be presented to the staff group laying out the case. The complainant can ask for support and representation from a member of staff or other person of their choice.

2. The person who the complaint has been made against will be informed by his/her line manager or appropriate person representing the Centre and will be invited to give either a verbal or written response which will be presented to the Senior Staff Group. They will also be entitled to representation of their choice.

3. The Senior Staff Group will then assess the case taking into consideration the following facts:

    - establish how the case has been treated, when, by whom and the reasons for any decisions taken.

    - look at the treatment of other comparable individuals.

    - look at differences in treatment and assess the reasons.

    - check for discriminatory patterns in decisions taken.

4. Based on the facts and the accounts given by the two parties, a final decision will be taken as soon as feasible, but no longer then two weeks after the case hearing.

Throughout the case the complainant will be offered support and counseling and employees will, if necessary, be offered work in another part of the Centre until the issue is resolved. In extreme cases employees will be offered paid leave.

The case will be monitored and reviewed throughout which will assist in future improvements of procedures and policy.

Appeals against decisions will follow the same procedures as stated in the staff disciplinary procedure.

Anti-harassment and discrimination training and awareness will be provided to all employees, managers and volunteers as part of THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE's Equal Opportunity policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation
It will be the responsibility of the current staff, council and executive committee to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities policy. The executive will review the policy on an annual basis. All data relating to individuals will be kept confidential.

Recommendations for improvements of performance and any necessary changes of policy will naturally occur through the process of monitoring and evaluation.

Updated and reviewed on 25th May 2025

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