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# Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

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### Statement of intent

St Chads community Project is committed to embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion in all of our strategies, activities and decisions. The charity aims to create and promote a culture that will support the board of trustees, staff, and volunteers to feel empowered, knowledgeable and able to administer this policy in all interactions with service users, children, parents, partners, stakeholders, customers and suppliers. The charity will promote equity, diversity and inclusion and will take steps to challenge discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in all aspects of the charity.

The charity understands that everyone's life experiences are different, and it aims to encourage a culture of open-ness and ensure people feel comfortable to ask questions related to equity, diversity and inclusion. The charity understands that discrimination and oppression



take many forms and that regular experience of micro aggressions can be as harmful as overt discrimination.

St Chads community Project is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals can make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We are committed to supporting our staff and applicants to be their authentic selves in the workplace without judgement and ensuring that diverse communities are celebrated.

We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic circumstances, class and life choices (the protected characteristics), amended in line with the Equality Act 2010. More detail on each of the protected characteristics can be found in [Appendix A](#).

We are also mindful of intersecting identities within our charity environment and will work with our communities to better understand the experience of multiple minority identities for individuals.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat children, parents, trustees, volunteers, service users, third party organisations and former staff members.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including members of the senior staff, deputies, practitioners, teachers, assistants, learning mentors, support staff, sessional staff, trainees, home workers, core staff, project staff, full time, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers, and apprentices (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy).

## **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997



This policy operates in conjunction with the following charity policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy

### **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**

The charity believes it is good practice to align itself with the requirements of the PSED, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

## **2. Principles underlying this policy**

In accordance with this policy, the charity commits to:

- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Promoting dignity and respect for all.
- Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of the charity's relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

Instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct, in line with the charity's Grievance Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act



1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

### 3. Aims

This Policy aims to:

- Promote and ensure equity, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of services, activities, strategies and decisions.
- Ensure there are appropriate plans in place to educate, inform, and where necessary challenge attitudes and promote good practice in equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure other policies and procedures prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the charity.
- Ensure that all trustees, staff, and volunteers are aware of the responsibility to comply with relevant equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory legislation and with the spirit of the Human Rights Act.

### 4. Use of Language

We sometimes use the acronym EDI as an abbreviation for equity, diversity and inclusion. While acronyms are inevitable, they can sometimes take away from the meaning of the words. It may be helpful to be clear on our meanings in the context of this policy:

- **Equity** – means providing what is needed for a given set of circumstances. This can be for people, communities, and organisations. It is NOT about treating everyone the same but looking at needs and meeting those specific needs.
- **Diversity** – means bringing difference to our organisation. This may be diversity of thought, experiences, background, etc. When harnessed and used well, diversity will bring about a richer experience for everyone involved in our organisation.
- **Inclusion** – means valuing the diversity we have. Making our organisation feel like a place where everyone belongs, is heard, and is valued.
- **Equality** – means providing equal opportunities to everyone and protecting people from being discriminated against.

The purpose in moving towards equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion is to create social justice.

We recognise that we must consider the language we use to ensure that it is appropriate and inclusive.



## 5. Roles and responsibilities

The board of trustees in collaboration with the CEO is responsible for:

- The effective operation of this policy.
- Ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- Monitoring the composition of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- Monitoring how the composition of the workforce encourages equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and meets the aims and commitments set out in this policy.
- Assessing how this policy, and any supporting action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.
- Reviewing this policy annually.
- Answering questions about the content and application of this policy.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Setting an appropriate standard of behaviour and leading by example.
- Ensuring that those they manage adhere to this policy and promote the charity's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.
- Taking appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities, in line with the charity's Flexible Working Policy.
- Making opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff.
- Ensuring staff are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Making staff progression decisions based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures where necessary to ensure fairness.
- Updating employment practices and procedures, and this policy, to take account of changes in the law.
- The day-to-day operational responsibility of this policy.
- Participating in appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection good practice.
- Organising equal opportunities training, including for those involved in management and recruitment.

All staff are responsible for:



- Conducting themselves to help the charity provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Understanding that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against their colleagues, service users, customers, suppliers, visitors and the public.
- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by their colleagues, service users, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the charity's work activities.

## 6. Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

**Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in [Appendix A](#). For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

**Harassment** related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

**Victimisation** is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

**Discrimination by association** refers to discrimination against a person who does not have a protected characteristic but because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic.

**Micro aggression** a comment or action that negatively targets a marginalised group of people. A micro aggression can be intentional or accidental. It is a form of discrimination. People who use micro aggressions may mean no harm toward the person or group they use it against.



## 7. Recruitment and selection

The charity will aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. The charity's recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the job and not disproportionate. The shortlisting of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. The charity will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with the CEO's approval, such as:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

The charity is required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents, e.g. a passport, before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, the charity will monitor applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information will be voluntary and will not adversely affect an applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before the shortlisting process and will be kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps the charity take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

The charity understands the need to be sensitive to cultural and religious beliefs within recruitment. Any specific needs a staff member might have regarding religious and cultural beliefs should be discussed with the line manager who should use their discretion.



## **8. Staff training and promotion and conditions of service**

Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff one to ones. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The charity will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff.

Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

The charity's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they equal opportunities for all.

## **9. Termination of employment**

The charity will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

The charity will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal, or other disciplinary action, in line with the charity's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## **10. Disability discrimination**

The charity encourages staff who are disabled or become disabled to inform the CEO or their line manager about their condition so that the charity can support them as appropriate.

Staff experiencing difficulties at work because of their disability (physical or otherwise) may wish to contact their line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Their line manager may wish to consult with the staff member and a medical adviser about possible adjustments.

The CEO will monitor the physical environment of the charity premises to consider whether certain features place physically disabled staff, job applicants, service users, or other stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, the charity will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

## **11. Part-time, zero hours, and fixed-term employees and agency workers**

The charity monitors the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and



promotion opportunities. The charity will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Flexible Working Policy.

The charity monitors its use of zero hours and fixed-term employees, sessional workers and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion, and permanent employment opportunities. The charity will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

## **12. Breaches of this policy**

If a member of staff believes that they may have been discriminated against, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the charity's Grievance Policy. If they believe that they may have been subject to harassment, they are encouraged to raise the matter with their line manager.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Any staff member who is found not to be understanding the principles of this policy will be asked to take part in training to support attitude and behaviour change. The charity understands that people make mistakes, and encourages a culture of open-ness, asking questions and understanding the points of view and circumstances of others.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The charity takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

## **13. Services**

The charity is committed to equity, equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone using the services, and also strives to prioritise and target the services to communities and groups in greatest need. The charity aims to make services accessible to the diverse communities in Gateshead and any other area in which it provides services as far as possible and reasonable given the charity's resources.

In order to make services accessible the charity understands that it must have clear knowledge of who currently uses them, and where there are gaps. When the charity



reviews its services, it will consider how to improve or change services to provide greater access to communities not yet using or making full use of the services.

Some of the actions the charity will take are:

- Understand the make-up of our local community.
- Use that information to reach out to all sections of our local community.
- Work with members of our local community to develop services which are genuinely equitable and inclusive.
- Assess all our services and activities to identify ways in which they can promote inclusion and diversity.
- Ensure that all the services we provide to our community meet the standards laid out in appropriate regulatory frameworks.
- Reflect the diversity of our community in our publicity and marketing.
- Assess how we present ourselves so that we promote inclusion and diversity.

#### **14. Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the CEO in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

The charity will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives. As part of this process, the charity will monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of staff. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting their line manager or the CEO.



## **Appendix A - Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics**

The definitions used in this appendix are based on the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

**Age:** The Act protects people of all ages; however, differential treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

**Disability:** The Act protects people who are disabled; the Act defines this as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Gender identity and/or reassignment:** The Act protects transgender people. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected, so a person who does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered by these protections.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** The Act protects people against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which they are entitled.

**Race:** The Act protects people of all races; the Act's definition of race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

**Religion or belief:** The Act protects people of any religion, including specific denominations or sects, as well as a lack of religion, i.e. employees or jobseekers who do not follow a certain religion or do not follow any religion are protected. The Act protects people of any belief; this is defined as any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of such belief, that is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

**Sex:** The Act protects men and women.

**Sexual orientation:** The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual staff.