



## Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy Statement

There are seven parts to this Policy Statement:

- A. Statement of Intent
- B. Employment (including volunteers and the Board of Trustees)
- C. Service Provision
- D. Training
- E. Monitoring and Review
- F. Complaints Procedure
- G. Conclusion

### **A. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

1. We recognise that certain groups and individuals in society experience negative discrimination.
2. People are discriminated against for a variety of reasons, including ethnicity, nationality, race, belief or religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, physical or mental disability, health status, marital or civil partnership status, trade union activity, pregnancy or maternity, caring responsibilities, age or class.
3. We believe that such discrimination is wrong.
4. We are committed to making sure that the Carers Centre provides equal opportunities and access to services for all.
5. We want to respond to the diverse needs of carers across Brighton and Hove, and we believe that we will be stronger as an organisation if we can attract and maintain a diverse team of staff, volunteers and management committee members.
6. We will do our best to ensure that those groups and individuals who are likely to experience discrimination receive fair treatment in terms of employment and services appropriate to their needs from the Carers Centre.
7. We will adopt active policies to take account of discrimination in society and in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation and codes of practice.
8. All staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Trustees must adhere to, and positively promote, the Carers Centre Equal Opportunities Policy.

Reviewed and approved: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Reviewed September 2018

Date of next review September 2020

## **B. EMPLOYMENT**

1. The Carers Centre is an equal opportunities employer. As such, we have a duty not to discriminate, intentionally or unintentionally, against any individual or section of society in our employment policies or practice.
2. All of the Carers Centre's employees and members of the Board of Trustees are individually responsible for upholding and implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy. It will be a disciplinary offence for a member of staff to hinder or fail to implement the policy.
3. Committee members and those who hold management, supervisory or other senior positions in the organisation have particular responsibilities to ensure effectiveness of this policy and the commitment of all staff and volunteers to it.
4. The Carers Centre will give a copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy to all employees and volunteers who work with us whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
5. Recruitment and Selection policies and procedures for staff and volunteers will be reviewed annually to ensure that individuals applying to the Carers Centre are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities with regard to volunteering, employment or seeking transfer. Where appropriate and possible, training will be given to enable staff to progress within the organisation.
6. A positive commitment to Equal Opportunities is a requirement of working at the Carers Centre. This will always be included in all Person Specifications, and will be tested during every recruitment process.
7. Equality issues will be a regular item in individual supervision sessions. This will include the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the individual and their work with carers.
8. In line with the provisions relating to disability in the Equality Act 2010, we will take reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities have access to employment at the Carers Centre. This may include making reasonable adjustments to the task or work environment.
9. Job advertisements will contain an Equal Opportunity Statement, in accordance with guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.
10. All applicants will receive an Equal Opportunities Statement plus an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.
11. As an organisation which supports and represents carers, we actively encourage people who have experience of caring for a relative or friend to become employees, volunteers or trustees. All Person Specifications will include a requirement for "awareness of the effect of caring responsibilities on children and/or adults". This awareness may be gained from personal or work experience.
12. The Carers Centre acknowledges the need for including compassionate leave and flexible working arrangements for the people who have caring or

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family commitments. Such flexibility will be balanced with the need to maintain our services. Details of these arrangements will form part of the Terms and Conditions of Employment and the Volunteer Agreement. We will develop a policy for supporting employees and volunteers who have caring responsibilities.

13. We will make reasonable adjustments to working practice to allow people to practice their religious beliefs.

### **C. SERVICE PROVISION**

1. We believe that carers as a group are often disadvantaged. They may have less opportunity to take part in the community, to work, or to develop their own interests as a result of their caring role. Their own physical or mental health may suffer if they do not have adequate support, and all too often the care they provide is taken for granted and their own needs are ignored.
2. Our services will aim to be accessible and appropriate to ALL carers in Brighton and Hove.
3. However particular groups of carers experience additional disadvantage or discrimination. We will ensure our services are relevant to these groups, and where appropriate we will take specific action to meet their needs.
4. We are determined that in providing services for carers no applicant will receive any thing less than equal consideration and opportunity in relation to their specific needs.
5. The only exception to this would be where we believe that someone's behaviour is likely to cause a risk to members of staff, volunteers or other people using our services.
6. Whenever we organise public meetings or other events for carers, we will:
  - Ensure that the venue is accessible to people with disabilities (including physical access, induction loops etc)
  - Offer to help carers with their costs for transport or alternative care
  - Offer advice on organising alternative care for carers who do not already have arrangements in place
  - Provide interpreters on request
  - Use venues which are easily accessible by public transportPublicity for our events will clearly explain the arrangements for all the above.
7. In addition, the Carers Centre will challenge the expression of prejudicial opinions, and will provide appropriate training so that staff are equipped to respond appropriately to carers or anyone with whom they come into contact who express negative prejudices against individuals or groups because of any of the factors listed in section A2. They will challenge

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sweeping statements or individual remarks and if necessary will seek advice from their line manager as to how to take matters further.

8. We will ensure that all meetings or groups which operate under the remit of the Carers Centre will work to agreed ground rules to include Equality of Opportunity, and respect for Diversity. Staff will be expected to explain these rules to group participants and anyone who repeatedly breaks these ground rules may be asked to leave the group. This applies to any committee, working group or carers group organised by the Carers Centre.
9. We will take active steps to identify and respond to the needs of people who have less access to services and those carers who face particular difficulty. This will include working carers, young carers, Black and Minority Ethnic communities, lesbian and gay carers, and other groups of carers whose needs are not being met. We will also target areas of the city, which experience a higher level of health problems and/or social exclusion.
10. We will do this by ensuring all our services are accessible and appropriate to as many carers as possible, while monitoring use of our services and developing targeted services as necessary.

#### ***D. TRAINING***

1. A training programme will be established so that all members of staff, members of the Trustee Board and users of the Centre's services will be acquainted with the Equal Opportunities Policy.
2. All members of the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers will be expected to take part in training relating to this policy.
3. Special training will be given to employees and Board members whose duties include taking part in any stage of the staff recruitment process or contact with members of the public.
4. Training will also be provided on Equality of Opportunity in providing services to carers.
5. The policy will be drawn to the attention of all prospective employees and on appointment will form part of the successful applicant's induction and ongoing training.
6. The Board of Trustees will monitor the use of its in-service and other training resources to ensure that no-one experiences direct or indirect discrimination.

#### ***E. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY***

The Board of Trustees and the Director are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy, both in terms of employment and service provision.

Reviewed and approved: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Reviewed September 2018

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Using the monitoring information provided the Board, Director, and management team will develop an annual strategy for promoting the Carers Centre to disadvantaged groups.

### **Monitoring Equal Opportunities in Employment**

1. We will monitor our recruitment and selection procedures by including an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form with each application pack. This form will be separated from the application form on receipt and will take no part in the selection process.
2. We will also keep a record of demographic information regarding staff, volunteers and the Board of Trustees.
3. The Director will ensure that an analysis of Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms and the demography of staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees, is carried out and presented to the Board of Trustees annually. In reviewing the report the Board of Trustees will:
  - Examine the distribution of employees, volunteers and Board of Trustees and the success rate of applicants according to the classifications on the Equal Opportunities Form.
  - Assess the extent to which distribution and success rate reflects equal opportunity for all groups.
  - Agree actions to redress any identified inequality

### **Monitoring Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery**

1. We will monitor the demographic details of people using our services. These will include, age, gender, ethnicity, health problems of the people they care for and where they live.
2. Each team manager will ensure that contacts with carers are recorded in line with this system.
3. The Director will produce quarterly reports for the Board of Trustees to show numbers of contacts, and relevant demographic information.
4. The committee will review these data to:
  - Examine the distribution of carers using our services according to the classifications in the Equal Opportunities Policy.
  - Assess the extent to which distribution reflects equal opportunity for all groups.
  - Agree actions to redress any identified inequality.

## ***F. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE***

Should any member of staff or a volunteer wish to raise concerns about the application of this policy, they should use the Grievance Procedure or the Harassment Procedure as appropriate.

Service users or members of the public should use the Carers Centre's Complaints Policy, which is repeated below.

We will do everything we can to make sure we keep to this policy in everything we do. If you have ideas about how we could improve, or you are

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not happy with anything we have done, we want to know about it. We also want to put things right if we can.

You don't have to give your name when you make a comment or complaint. If you do we can tell you what we will do about your comment.

### **1/ Give us feedback**

If you want to make a complaint or comment about our services, the first thing is to speak to the person involved. Tell them what you think. Problems can often be dealt with by talking things over. If you can't resolve the problem then you can talk to a manager.

### **2/ Talk to a Manager**

The Carers Centre staff work in three teams, each one has a manager. Managers are always happy to hear your views and ideas and will try to resolve any problems.

The Managers are:

**Pam Windsor** for the Adult Carers Team

**Tom Lambert** for the Young Carers Team

The Manager will keep a record of your comments. If you have a complaint they will talk to the people involved and then discuss the issue with you.

### **3/ Contact the Director**

If you have a complaint which has not been resolved by talking to a manager you can contact **Chris Lau**, the Director of the Carers Centre. He will investigate any complaint and discuss the matter with you. He will send you a written response to your comment or complaint.

### **4/ Contact the Board of Trustees**

The Carers Centre's Trustee Board is ultimately responsible for everything we do. They are elected by our members to run the Carers Centre. If you are still not satisfied with the way your comment or complaint has been handled, you may write to:

**The Chairperson of the Trustee Board  
The Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove  
18 Bedford Place  
Brighton, BN1 2PT**

Mark your envelope "CONFIDENTIAL" and it will be given to the chair unopened. The Chair will set up a small panel of people to investigate the complaint.

The Chairperson will contact you within 7 days and you will be invited to meet with the panel within 28 days.

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You may have an advocate/friend with you at this meeting if you wish. The Chairperson will inform you of any decisions and recommendations within 28 days.

Please let us know if you need help to write letters. We may be able to advise you on people/organisations that can help you. If you have a disability or if you have difficulty in communicating we will ensure that you have access to whatever assistance you require.

#### **5/ Contact the Charity Commission**

If you have major concerns about the way the Carers Centre has acted, you might be able to complain to the Charity Commission, which is the government body for regulating charities. If you want to make a complaint to the Charity Commission you will need to get hold of their booklet "Inquiries into Charities". You can get this from their publication order line on 01823 345427.

### **G. CONCLUSION**

We recognise that an Equal Opportunities programme to cover employment and services cannot take the form of a single policy decision, which is implemented on a specific date.

The details of the policy and practice will develop over a lengthy period and change will be a continuing feature of the programme.

As the policy is developed and monitored, along with other policies and procedures, it may be necessary to influence changes in long established practices and attitudes. This will be a gradual process.

Our commitment to equality of opportunity and to diversity will shape all our planning and all our work. We will ensure that all our strategic plans take into account current progress in relation to this policy and make plans for further development.

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Reviewed September 2018

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