

The Hollybush Centre Ltd.
77-81 Meaford Drive, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. ST3 2BB
Equality & Diversity Policy

Policy/Aims

The Hollybush Centre is committed to the principal of equal opportunity in employment, service, education and training.

The Centre will ensure that no employee, applicant for employment, customer or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which can not be seen to be justified in relation to employment, education or training.

As employers and people who provide goods and services to the public, we will take measures to make sure that we are not discriminating against disabled people. We will provide the same standard of service to everyone and ensure that our services and facilities are accessible to everyone.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the business changes in nature and size. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed every year.

Objectives for staff, prospective employees and volunteers.

The Centre will:

Raise awareness of equal opportunities amongst all employees and volunteers, encourage all employees and volunteers to support and carry out the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Policy and encourage the contribution of ideas towards new or ongoing initiatives;

Recruit, train and promote employees on the basis of the skills, qualifications, experience, aptitude and ability they bring to the job;

Ensure that, wherever possible, the Centre environment is not disabling and that access and facility requirements of employees, customer and volunteers are taken into account when reviewing the suitability of accommodation, equipment and materials;

Endeavour to ensure Centre literature, marketing and publicity materials are free from stereotypes;

Endeavour to ensure that all resource material is free from racist, sexist and other discriminatory assumptions, images and language;

Ensure that all prospective volunteers are guided towards appropriate programmes of training.

Implementation

In order to ensure that the Centre is achieving its Equal Opportunities aims the Centre will regularly monitor, review and communicate the policy.

Equal Opportunities Guidelines for Implementation

1 Introduction

The Centre believes that education is a right for all and recognises that all employees, customers and volunteers are entitled to equal treatment. The Centre will actively work towards offering equality of opportunity and fair treatment to all customers, volunteers and staff. Positive steps will be taken to ensure no forms of unlawful discrimination occur.

Ensuring equality of opportunity in all aspects of the Centre's work is the responsibility of the Management Board. Ensuring the implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Chief Executive.

The promotion of equal opportunities is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers.

2 The Centre Environment

Ensuring physical access to the Centre is the responsibility of the Management Board. We have a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, updated DDA 2005, to promote 'disability equality', to eliminate discrimination and promote positive attitudes towards everyone by following the recommendations outlined in the Code of Practice.

The Centre will strive to create and maintain an environment which is accessible to all and in which all customers, volunteers and staff feel comfortable and secure;

All visitors and newly appointed staff will receive a positive welcome from the first point of contact.

3 The Selection, Recruitment and Promotion of Staff.

Ensuring equality of opportunity in all aspects of personal practice is the responsibility of the Management Board who shall monitor the following procedure:

All posts will have a job description and person specification;

All criteria for the post will be objective and will not discriminate directly or indirectly;

Applicants will receive a copy of the job description and person specification and will therefore be fully aware of the duties and criteria for the post;

If a post is to be advertised the advertisement will contain the criteria for the post and will not discriminate either directly or indirectly;

If candidates are interviewed, an interview panel will always consist of at least two, with every effort being made to ensure a gender balance and that, where possible, all aspects of equal opportunities are taken into account;

All interviewers will be required to keep a record of the interviews and candidates' responses by way of an interview assessment form;

Applicants will be asked if they have any disability or health problem that may require special facilities or arrangements in order to conduct the interview;

If a candidate has a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) consideration will be given to reviewing working practices or equipment in order to ensure that the candidate will not be disadvantaged in being successful for the post by way of his or her disability;

Consideration will be given to a reasonable variation of the time of the start and end of the working day where an employee has Carer responsibilities, e.g. children and elderly relatives, that impact on these working arrangements;

All recruitment material including the application form will be available in various formats subject to the need of the applicant, e.g. large print. The Centre will also receive applications in a variety of formats subject to individual needs.

4 Code of Practice for Personal Harassment

Personal harassment is behaviour which is objectionable and offensive and which might threaten the victim's security or create an intimidating or hostile environment which may hinder them in their performance. Bullying is included in this category.

The Commission for Racial Equality (1995) defines racial harassment as:

"Violence which may be verbal, or physical, and which includes attacks on property as well as the person, suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality and ethnic or national origins, when the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence of racism"

The European Commission's 'Recommendations and Code of Practice on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work'(1991) defines sexual harassment as:

"Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct"

The Centre will not tolerate harassment, recognises it as a form of discrimination and acknowledges that harassment itself, and failure to act against it, can constitute unlawful discrimination.

The Centre will be responsible for establishing procedures to deal with all discriminatory incidents.

All staff and volunteers will be informed of these procedures as part of the induction process.

In addition to dealing with the offender, the Centre will provide support for the victim.

5 Guidelines on Dealing with Harassment

If you are a member of staff or a volunteer and you believe that you are being subjected to any behaviour which you regard as harassment you are advised of the following guidelines:

Do not ignore it. If you feel that you are being subjected to any behaviour which contravenes our Equal Opportunities Statement/Policy do not feel that it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it. Many people are tempted to ignore this behaviour for fear of being labelled a troublemaker but it is unlikely that the behaviour will stop if you ignore it. The harasser is often doing this to try and exert control, so silence will be interpreted as weakness and acquiescence.

Ask the harasser to stop, preferably in the presence of a representative or friend. This will prevent the harasser claiming that you did not complain personally, leading them to believe that you did not object to their behaviour. Or you can do this in writing – outline as clearly as possible what behaviour you find offensive and the effect it has on you. If you feel unable to tackle the person concerned, this does not imply that you consent to the behaviour nor will it prejudice any complaint you may wish to bring.

Get support. Talk about the problem with a friend, colleague or the Chief Executive. Do not hesitate to contact someone even when an incident occurs only once. They may be able to suggest ways of resolving the problem.

Collect evidence of the behaviour. It is important to keep a note of all relevant incidents including dates, times, places. This will be invaluable in proving your case if you decide to make a formal

complaint. Wherever possible get witnesses to provide factual evidence. If there are no witnesses to an incident, tell a colleague and make a note of it.

Find out if anyone else is being treated unfairly by the same person. Often a harasser will have a history of such behaviour. You will gain confidence from discovering you are not alone.

Report the problem to the Chief Executive as soon as possible. Even if you decide not to pursue the case, it is important that the Chief Executive is aware of any incidents of harassment.

Make a formal complaint. If you, or your friend or colleague cannot resolve the problem by asking the harasser to stop, you, your friend or colleague should make a formal complaint, which should then be investigated by management.

If formal disciplinary proceedings are to be taken against the alleged harasser, you will be required to give evidence in writing and normally by attendance. It may be difficult for you to undertake this but it would not be in your best interests for the case to be considered in your absence. Advice and support will be given to you.

6 Staff Development

All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities for implementing the Centre's Equal Opportunities Policy.

There will be a training programme for all staff and directors on the implementation of this Equal Opportunities Policy.

Personal development will be encouraged through the supervision mechanism, which will integrate all aspects of Equal Opportunities issues.

7 Management Board

The role of the Management Board will be:

To promote an awareness of the Centre's Equal Opportunities Policy and its' implications

To offer guidance and clarification on the Policy's implementation to employees, customers and volunteers where it is required

To monitor complaints and breaches of the policy as a standing item at monthly Management Board meetings.

Hollybush Centre Ltd
Equal Opportunities Policy
Updated March 05/March 06/Jan 07/Jan 08/Jan 09/Jan 10