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## **NORTHDALE**

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

#### **Introduction**

Northdale wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity and diversity in all aspects of its activities giving every individual the chance to achieve their potential, free from prejudice and discrimination. This policy will be implemented within the framework of current legislation and applies to job applicants, employees, volunteers and users of Northdale's services who, for the purposes of this Policy, will be referred to as the Northdale Community.

#### **Policy Statement**

Northdale:

- Recognises that in our society groups and individuals have been and will continue to be discriminated against.
- Also recognises that young people are often subject to discrimination specifically on grounds of their age.
- Is committed to achieving Equal Opportunities and Diversity in all aspects of its work.
- Will aim to ensure that no member of the Northdale Community, either current or potential, is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, cultural origin, religion, disability, experience of mental distress, HIV status, caring responsibility, class, education, employment status, political belief or unrelated criminal conviction (this is not an exhaustive list).
- Believes that members of the Northdale Community should not be excluded from any opportunity without due reason.
- Is committed to a programme of action to make this Equality and Diversity Policy effective. Our policy aims to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer or service user:
  - Receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, sex or membership of any minority group.

Date of last review: 14 November 2019

- Is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- Will ensure that selection criteria and procedures are frequently reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- Will ensure that members of the Northdale Community will not be discriminated against in the advice and support they are given. Nor will they be denied access to opportunities because of their assumed abilities, skills or behaviour and will only be judged on their own merits.
- Will be mindful of its commitment to Equality and Diversity when hiring contractors and other outside agencies.
- Will actively encourage individuals from all sectors of the local population to offer themselves for election to the Management Committee.
- Will ensure that breaches of the Equality and Diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

It is the intention of Northdale that recruitment decisions are based solely on the relevant merits and abilities of candidates. The organisation will require, therefore, that those involved in staff selection and volunteer recruitment do not discriminate, whether directly or indirectly, in the making of those decisions.

All applicants for posts with the organisation shall be given as much clear accurate information in advertisements, job descriptions and interviews as necessary to enable them to gauge their suitability for the post.

Recruitment literature shall not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants unless this is relevant to the post and specific exemption from Equal Opportunities legislation has been sought. Vacancies will be aimed at as wide a group of suitable candidates as possible.

Application forms shall be as clear as possible and shall not be phrased in too narrow or restrictive terms. The application form will be free of personal questions, particularly those about age, marital status and number and ages of children.

All applicants and prospective members of the Northdale Community shall be informed that the organisation operates an Equal Opportunities Policy. Such information will be conveyed in all application forms and advertisements. A copy of the Policy Statement will be provided to all job applicants and prospective volunteers.

Those who conduct the recruitment interviews will be trained to take an unbiased approach regardless of the applicants race, gender, marital status, and to ask only questions which relate to the job or

volunteering opportunity and that are non-discriminatory. Questions relating to the following topics will not be asked at interviews – age, marriage plans, marital status, occupation of spouse, number and age of children, family intentions, religious or political beliefs, race, nationality or sexual orientation.

## **Promotion**

Northdale aim to promote equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination and eliminate harassment through the following:

- Opposing all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- All members of Staff (whether part-time, full-time or temporary), Volunteers and Service Users will be treated fairly and with respect.
- All vacancies will be advertised internally and externally simultaneously and will include a statement on Equal Opportunities.
- Selection for employment/volunteering, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All selection/rejection decisions will be recorded.
- All members of Staff, Volunteers and Service Users will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of individuals will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- All members of Staff, Volunteers and Service Users have a legal and moral obligation not to discriminate and to report incidents of discrimination against any individual or group of individuals to the General or Operations Manager.
- Equal Opportunities will be considered in all activities and resources. It is crucial that all members of the Northdale Community are able to participate and enjoy the activities without discrimination.

## **Training**

Training and development opportunities will be given to any member of the Northdale Community, as will the opportunity to discuss career development and training with the General or Operational Manager.

Every attempt will be made to ensure learning materials, where possible, portray positive images of people while also reinforcing anti-discriminatory language and images of all individuals and groups.

## **Decision Making Processes**

Northdale aims to reflect the makeup of the local population in its decision making processes and will actively encourage members of groups suffering discrimination to be involved in the decision making processes.

If the Management Committee or decision-making processes should be found to be unrepresentative Northdale may consider co-options or reserved places for those who can make a special contribution.

## **Sex Discrimination**

The provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act apply to both men and women. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986 makes it unlawful, unless the job or volunteering opportunity is covered by an exemption, to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marriage. Discrimination occurs when a condition, or requirement is applied which cannot be justified.

Direct Sex Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of sex than a person of the other sex would be in the same circumstances.

Indirect Sex Discrimination may still occur when a requirement or condition is applied equally to men and women. Such a condition may nevertheless discriminate against one sex because the proportion of one sex, which can comply with it, is much smaller than the proportion of the other sex that can comply with it.

Marriage Discrimination occurs when a married person is treated less favourably on the grounds of marital status than an unmarried person of the same sex would be in the same circumstances; this discrimination may be direct or indirect as explained above.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Northdale wishes to make it quite clear that sexual harassment is unlawful and views harassment very seriously. The definition adopted by Northdale is:

Repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks which are offensive to the person involved, which cause the employee, volunteer or service user to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed or which creates a threatening or intimidating environment.

## **Racial Discrimination**

The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person directly or indirectly in the field of employment. Direct discrimination consists of treating a person differently and less favourable on the grounds of their racial origin, whereas indirect discrimination consists of treating everyone the same but in a way, which results in some people not being able to comply where others from another racial background can. The demands of Religion (e.g. prayer times and religious holidays) and of culture (traditional dress) are accepted.

## **Racial Harassment**

Date of last review: 14 November 2019

It is imperative that members of Staff are aware of legal commitments under Race Discrimination legislation and of its opposition to all forms of racism. Incidents include:

- Physical assaults/threats against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity.
- Racist insult/joke/name calling.
- Racist graffiti/any other written insult.
- Provocative behaviour (e.g. wearing racist badges or insignia).
- Racial comments in meetings conversation/workshops.
- Attempting to recruit for racist organisations or groups.
- Racist literature (leaflets, comics, magazines) brought into the organisation's premises.
- Providing a platform for racism.

## **Sexuality**

The Equality Act 2010 identifies sexual orientation as a 'characteristic' group which means that people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual/straight are protected against discrimination. Northdale, as an equal opportunities organisation, is therefore fully committed to the implementation of this Act and will seek to overcome indirect discrimination by:

- Acknowledging the existence of this 'characteristic' group either as employees, volunteers or service users
- Provision of information about relevant support organisations
- Provision of regular training for all members of the Northdale Community
- Offering training opportunities for our Service Users
- Making clear its expectations of members of the Northdale Community in the conduct of their duties in any circumstances where they represent Northdale.

People who are known (or perceived) to be Lesbian or Gay regularly experience harassment, verbal or physical assault in many areas of their lives including the workplace. Northdale will not tolerate this direct discrimination.

## **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 introduces new laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many disabled people face. Northdale supports the Disability Discrimination Act.

It is against the law for an employer or voluntary organisation to treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else because of his or her disability, unless there is good reason. This applies to all employment matters (including recruitment, training, promotion and dismissal.)

It is unlawful to victimise people or to knowingly help another person to discriminate. Northdale wishes to encourage opportunities for people with disabilities and/or mental health issues.

## **Monitoring, Review and Responsibility**

The Management Committee will be responsible for implementing this Equality and Diversity policy and is committed to monitoring and reviewing it on an annual basis. Any complaint or grievance should be made in accordance with the appropriate Policy and Procedure.

## **Staff Training Requirements**

The successful implementation of this policy depends on the awareness and commitment of all members of the Northdale Community. Hence all new members of the Community will be made aware of its existence and on joining the organisation, and reminded they must conform to it on a regular basis. Staff training is undertaken on line using the Citation System.

## **References**

Equality Act 2010  
Equal Pay Act 1976  
Sex Discrimination Act 1975  
Race Relations Act 1976 and Amendment 2000  
The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
Employment Act 2002  
The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

## **Related Policies and Procedures**

Complaints and Commendations  
Disciplinary Procedure  
Equal Opportunities  
Grievance Procedure  
Staff Application  
Volunteers.