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| Equality and Diversity Policy | | | |
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| **Version Control** | | | |
| **Version** | **Author** | **Date** | **Changes** |
| 3 | CCC | 25/07/2019 | Pregnancy, maternity leave or paternity leave |
| 4 | MC | 14/08/2019 | Scope, Definition, Policy Statement, Monitoring.  Now covers staff and volunteers, clients, subcontractors and anyone on CENCA business |
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**Equality and Diversity Policy**

August 2019

**Equality and diversity policy for paid staff**

**1. Introduction**

* 1. Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice (CENCA) is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive culture for:
* all those who need our services
* our volunteers
* our staff and
* other stakeholders.

We recognise the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and fairness, and challenging discrimination.

We welcome our legal duties not to discriminate as a service provider and an employer. We aim to go beyond the narrow scope of legislative compliance and follow best practice, making equality, fairness and diversity a fundamental part of all our activities.

We recognise people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and we wish to encourage and harness these differences to make our services more relevant and approachable.

* 1. Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of race, colour, sex, gender identity (transgender), disability, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, marital / partnership or family status, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, social class, educational background, employment status, working pattern, trade union membership, pregnancy, maternity leave, paternity leave or any other irrelevant factor.

1. **The Definition of Equality and Diversity**

**2.1**. Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

**2.2**. Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for CENCA.

**2.3**. Equality and Diversity are not interchangeable but interdependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed and taken account of.

1. **Scope**

**3.1**. This policy applies to direct employees of CENCA, workers (engaged through, or by, an employment agency or bureau and supplied on a temporary basis), and all job applicants regarding recruitment

**3.2.** Where CENCA’s services are provided by external contractors or third parties on the basis of a specification set by CENCA, these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to CENCA’s Equality and Diversity Policy whilst providing services on behalf of CENCA.

**3.3.** This policy applies also to sub-contractors. CENCA will monitor the performance of contractors and/or third parties and take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviours. However, if any issues become apparent with regards to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party, these will be taken very seriously by CENCA and raised in the strongest possible terms with the contractor or third party.

1. **Legal obligations**

**4.1** In valuing diversity, Central and East Northamptonshire CAB is committed to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality. Current equality legislation and associated codes of practice are taken into account, including, but not limited to, the following:

* Equal Pay Act 1970.
* Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended).
* Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended).
* Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).
* The Employment Rights Act 1996.
* The Human Rights Act 1998.
* The Work and Families Act 2006.
* Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).
* Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.
* Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.
* Civil Partnership Act 2004 (as amended).
* Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

**5. Policy Statement**

**5.1** We are committed to the achievement of equal opportunities; this is central to our mission. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of any of the nine "protected characteristics" as defined by the Act. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

We also recognise that the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for staff to discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of the protected characteristics of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision goods and services.

**5.2.** Although discrimination in goods and services because of age is not yet covered by the Equality Act 2010, CENCA includes it as a matter of good practice.

**5.2.1.** We believe discrimination, either direct or indirect as defined in law, is unacceptable and we will not tolerate it.

**5.2.2.** We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment against an individual because they are associated with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

**5.2.3.** We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment against an individual on a perception that he or she has a particular protected characteristic.

**5.2.4.** We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any of our employees or volunteers by third parties such as clients or customers.

**5.2.5.** We will not tolerate the victimisation of any employee or volunteer because he or she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so, or being about to do so.

**5.3.** However, our policy is not limited to the minimum standards imposed by the law. We are committed to achieve best practice in the area of equal opportunities. Everyone who is or who seeks to be a member of staff or volunteer of CENCA is entitled to receive equality of opportunity and treatment that is appropriate and fair irrespective of:

• age

• colour

• disablement

• marital status

• race/ethnicity

• religion

• sex

• gender

• employment status

• sexual orientation

• nationality

• caring responsibility

• socio-economic status

• other unjustifiable factors

This list is not exhaustive.

**6. Meeting clients’ needs**

**6.1** We are committed to treating all clients equally and fairly and to not discriminate unlawfully against them. We will also, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity. We will ensure that clients:

* are able to access the service in ways that suit them
* are given help that is relevant to their problem and situation
* are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination
* have their needs listened to, and met whenever possible

**6.2** CENCA is committed to meeting the diverse needs of clients. We will take steps to identify the needs of clients in our community and develop policies and procedures setting out how we will meet clients’ needs and for ensuring the services we provide are accessible to all. We will take account, in particular, the needs of clients with a disability (including mental health problems) and clients who are unable to communicate effectively in English. We will consider whether particular groups are predominant within our client base and devise appropriate policies / procedures to meet their needs. Such groups include: men and women; carers; older people; members of religious groups; ethnic groups or nationalities and lesbian, gay or transgender people.

**7. Employment (paid staff)**

**7.1 General statement**

As an employer, CENCA will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotions and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, selections for redundancy, references and any other employment related activities.

**7.2 Recruitment and selection**

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

* we endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable
* employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit
* where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applicants from all sections of society and especially from those underrepresented in the workforce
* selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate
* where appropriate and necessary lawful exemption (genuine occupation requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups
* any third parties acting for CENCA in respect of employment are made aware of the requirements not to discriminate and act accordingly.

**7.3 Training and development**

We will ensure that all employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Selection for all training and career development opportunities will be purely on the basis of merit. Appraisals of performance will be conducted objectively and on time.

**7.4 Meeting individual needs**

CENCA will do its utmost to meet the needs of individuals at work, for example:

* Recognising caring and domestic responsibilities.
* Working patterns - wherever possible training courses and meetings will be planned to allow attendance by staff working non-standard hours / working patterns.
* Disability – reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to remove barriers and enable disabled staff to carry out their roles.
* Religious practices – time off and suitable facilities for prayer will be provided wherever possible. Requests for annual leave to celebrate religious festivals will be accommodated wherever possible.

**8. Volunteers**

**8.1 General statement**

Volunteers contribute significantly to the diversity of the organisation. They can expect to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination. They are likewise expected to treat others fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination. Due to the restrictions imposed by employment law, volunteers are not entitled to the same rights and protections as employees.

**9. Implementing the policy**

**9.1 Responsibilities**

The overall managerial responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the Chief Officer.

#### 9.1.1 All staff

At all levels of the organisation staff are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.

#### 9.1.2 All managers

Managers are responsible for promoting this policy and ensuring it is understood and complied with by all staff in their area, dealing with breaches and complaints (whether reported or not) seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially and contributing ideas for the advancement of diversity principles within the organisation. Managers are expected to be proactive in identifying circumstances in which elements of the policy can benefit individual members of staff, and encourage and support staff in making use of such benefits.

**9.1.3 All volunteers**

At all levels of the organisation, including trustees, volunteers are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure that they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements.

**9.2 Conduct and general standards of behaviour:**

All staff including volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. CENCA will not tolerate behaviour such as:

* making threats
* physical violence
* shouting
* swearing at others
* rudeness
* isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
* telling offensive jokes or name calling
* displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist / racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email / text message or any other format.

CENCA encourages staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

**9.3 Complaints of discrimination**

CENCA will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, volunteers, clients or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation’s grievance or complaints procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by staff, volunteers, clients and other third parties.

**10. Monitoring**

**10.1** The Operations Manager will review relevant performance indicators and will make regular reports to the Chief Officer. This report will review both progress against the action plan and make appropriate proposals for further development.

**10.1.1.** Equality monitoring will be carried out to measure the effectiveness of CENCA’s Equal Opportunities Policy, to check the policy is working and act as a basis for future plans.

**10.1.2.** Monitoring information will only be used for this purpose and will be treated confidentially.

**10.1.3.** We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

**10.1.4.** We will monitor recruitment and selection procedures to ensure discrimination is not occurring.

**10.2.** We will monitor and publish our progress on achieving greater Equality and Diversity, specifically:

**10.2.1.** Demographic details of staff

**10.2.2.** Gender pay gap

**10.3.** CENCA will monitor and record equal opportunities information about staff and volunteers, including trustees, on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

**10.4** Where it is possible to do so, and where doing so will not cause offence or discomfort to those whom it is intended to protect, we will monitor the sexual orientation and religion or belief of staff and volunteers so to ensure that they are not being discriminated against in terms of the opportunities or benefits available to them.

We will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and will have no bearing on opportunities or benefits.

We will monitor all elements of:

* recruitment and selection processes
* promotion and transfer
* training
* terms and conditions of employment
* take up of benefits (e.g. flexible working requests)
* grievance and disciplinary procedures
* resignations, redundancies and dismissals.

**11. Review**

**11.1** This policy will be reviewed not less than once a year or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance or problem or in the light of emerging legislation or best practice that could impact on this policy.

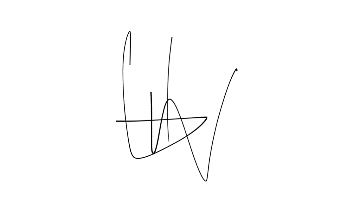
Signed Date 14th August 2019



Mary Clarke

Chief Officer

Signed Date 14th August 2019



Carrick Ferguson

Chair

**● Associated Policies**

○ Recruitment and Selection Policy

○ Flexible Working Policy

○ Training Policy

○ Complaints and Compliments Procedures

○ Induction Policy

○ Grievance and Disciplinary Policy