



Hilldrop Area Community Association Equality and Diversity Policy

May 2021

Policy No. 04	This policy was adopted by HACA in June 2018 and will be reviewed at least every 2 years.	Date of Review: May 2021
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As an Islington employer, Hilldrop Area Community Association (HACA) is committed to taking positive action to redress discrimination and to provide genuine equality of opportunity.

The aim of the policy is to ensure no volunteer, job applicant, employee, trainee, apprentice, worker or service user is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, or sexual orientation. The policy also serves to encourage a culture of diversity among the workplace and userbase, ensuring that every person at the centre is treated equally, with dignity, respect and opportunity.

Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants seeking employment.

- The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.
- The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any Codes of Practice.
- We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.

Although this document concentrates upon equal opportunities in employment practices, it is also HACA's intention to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of all its services to the community.

The policy and its practise will be periodically monitored to ensure its effectiveness.

Definitions

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination takes place when a person is treated less favourably than others (in the same circumstances) on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, sex, marital status, sexuality, disability, class, age or religious belief.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination means applying a condition, or requirement which adversely effects one particular group considerably more than another, and cannot be strictly justified in terms of the requirements for delivering the service.

Racial Discrimination

Discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. The policy is directed towards the effects of racial discrimination in employment, and the combating of the disproportionately high unemployment this produces.

Sex Discrimination

Discrimination on the grounds of a person's sex, gender identity, marital status, or maternal/paternal status. HACA is committed to countering discrimination against women in all its forms, including salaries and the recognition that employment practise must, where possible, be geared to the demands of childcare and the care of other dependants. Those identifying as transgender are similarly protected from discrimination by this policy.

Discrimination on the Grounds of Sexuality

Where a person is discriminated on the grounds of not being heterosexual. HACA recognises that discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals is more complicated by the fact homosexuals and bisexuals are not necessarily identifiable.

HACA believes that it is important for the development of children and young people that they are aware of different sexualities in nonstereotyped forms. HACA will encourage young people to adopt non-judgmental attitudes in their dealings with other groups.

Discrimination on the Grounds of Disability

This policy covers all people with a disability (including the mental health), impairment or additional needs who, on account of injury, illness, or congenital deformity, may be challenged in obtaining or keeping employment, or in undertaking work on his/her own account, of a kind which apart from that injury, illness or deformity, would be suited to their age, experience and qualifications.

A disabled applicant shall not be disbarred from employment on the grounds of disability, restricted access or inadequate equipment, where, with reasonable efforts and expenditure, the issues could be resolved.

Discrimination on the Grounds of Age

HACA recognises that discrimination occurs against applicants for employment on the grounds of age. HACA is committed to combating this and will ensure that all persons receive equality of access to employment and services regardless of age.

Discrimination on the Grounds of Religion

People of all faiths and beliefs are protected from discrimination of any sort, and a culture of tolerance will be promoted among all staff and users. Those using the centre are free to wear religious dress.

Selection, Recruitment and Promotion within the Organisation

- 1) The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
- 2) Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
- 3) Job descriptions will ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
- 4) We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
- 6) All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
- 7) All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- 8) Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.
- 9) Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- 10) We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
- 11) Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

12) Equivalent experience, qualifications and tests will be used in order to select the best candidate using inclusive practice.

Training and Retraining

HACA recognises the importance of employing people from discriminated groups across all departments and, at all levels including senior management. It will therefore ensure that where it is possible, employees will be given training and support in order to achieve equality of opportunity.

HACA employees are expected to comply and practice the Equality and Diversity Policy, and training will be given to employees on all aspects of the policy.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as repeated, un-reciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an employees' job security or create an intimidating working environment effecting their dignity.

HACA will not condone harassment of any employee within the organisation, whether these acts are committed by members of the Trustee Board, public, or by colleagues. Nor will HACA condone any acts of harassment by employees against members of the public. HACA is committed to grievance, disciplinary and other Staff Code procedures which will provide proper redress. See also: **Dignity and Anti-Bullying Policy**.

Employment Practices and Conditions of Service

All service conditions will be reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate against any particular group and provide for the varying needs of the entire workforce.

Where a member of staff is convicted of an offence arising solely by reason of his/her homosexuality (which would not be considered an offence for heterosexuals) it shall not be treated as an offence for the general purposes of the HACA disciplinary code. However, in circumstances where the law requires HACA to keep records of offences, then this will be carried out.

The mode of dress and presentation of all employees shall be restricted only on the grounds of health and safety.

It will be a condition of service that employees adhere to the Equality and Diversity Policy and failure to do so shall be cause for disciplinary measures to be taken.

Organisational Arrangements

This policy applies to all employees, trustees and service users. The Head of Centre will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the policy. It is, however, the responsibility of other supervisory staff to actively promote equality of opportunity within their own sphere of responsibility and report back any concerns.

Recording and Monitoring

We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy. Monitoring may involve:-

- a) the collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applicants and current employees;
- b) the examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
- c) recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

Resources

HACA's commitment to the success of this policy is unqualified and will give priority to making the necessary resources available to improve Equality and Diversity awareness

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

Existing Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate and adequate to cover all aspects of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Policy on the recruitment and employment of ex-offenders

Background

HACA uses the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants and volunteers for positions of trust. We do this in compliance with the DBS's Code of Practice (copies are available on the internet at www.direct.gov.uk)

Policy

The Code of Practice requires us to treat all our job applicants and volunteers who have a criminal record fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against staff and applicants on the basis of a criminal record or other information revealed by a disclosure.

HACA is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from employment. This will depend upon the nature of the position you have applied for and the background of your offences.

During the application process

When you apply for a job you will be told if the position is subject to a criminal record check. If it is, you will be asked about any criminal record you may have. You should include details of all cautions, reprimands, warnings and convictions. This information is kept confidential and is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. We select applicants for interview based upon their skills, experience and qualifications.

A failure to disclose a criminal record (including all cautions, reprimands, warnings and convictions, spent or otherwise) at the application stage will normally lead to the withdrawal of any subsequent job offer.

If you are offered a job

The job offer will be made subject to satisfactory completion of a criminal record and other checks such as references, medical fitness for the post, proof of relevant qualifications and any other essential requirements for the post.

In the event of the successful candidate having a criminal record, the candidate will have the opportunity of discussing the disclosure with a service manager. As a minimum, the following will be taken into account when deciding whether to confirm the appointment:

- ✓ Whether the conviction or information was disclosed during the application stage;
- ✓ Whether the conviction or information revealed is relevant to the job;
- ✓ How long ago the offence(s) took place;
- ✓ The candidate's age at the time of the offence(s);
- ✓ The number and pattern of offences.
- ✓ Any other relevant circumstances.

All staff/advisers in a position to make recruitment decisions are supported to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances surrounding a criminal record or will seek appropriate advice before making a decision. No decision will be made until an explanation of the above issues have been considered.

Appeal

You should appeal to the DBS if you believe that the disclosure information is not accurate.

HACA will decide whether the nature of the inaccuracy is such that a decision on whether to appoint should be postponed until the appeal is completed.

Policy on handling disclosure information

All disclosure information is kept securely and will only be seen by those who need to use it to carry out their duties. After a period of six months, it is securely disposed of. The disclosure forms are never kept on personal files.