

## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

### **Introduction**

1. This Policy aims to cover all aspects of the operation of Mirfield Community Trust (MCT):
  - a. between members of the Trustee Board and staff members
  - b. between staff members and other staff members
  - c. between different members of the Trustee Board
  - d. between MCT and its service providers, e.g. cleaner, trades etc.
  - e. between MCT and members of the public and service users
  - f. between MCT and all other users
  - g. oppressive behaviour by staff members or members of the Board of Trustees inside or outside the organisation
2. MCT recognises that in this society, groups and individuals have been, and continue to be, oppressed and discriminated against on a number of grounds. These include: race, nationality, ethnic or cultural origins, responsibility for dependents, physical or mental disability, language, appearance, religious belief (or non-belief), marital status, political beliefs, age, social class, gender, sexual orientation or accommodation status. This list is not exhaustive.
3. MCT recognises that equality applies to both employment relationships and service provision to members of the public. The role of volunteers is unclear in law and therefore MCT aims to apply this policy as much to volunteers as to staff members wherever possible.
4. MCT recognises, therefore, that equality issues need to be embedded in all areas of work and do not relate solely to employment relationships.
5. MCT accepts that discrimination often occurs when there is no intention to discriminate but where a system or practice has the effect of being discriminatory. It is also possible that discrimination may occur where the discriminator is unaware of it.
6. The following classifications of discrimination may exist:
  - a. Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably on certain grounds than someone else in a similar situation.

- b. Indirect discrimination is where a requirement or condition is applied equally to everyone but which has an adverse impact on one group of people which cannot be objectively justified.
- c. Disability discrimination also includes the concept of discrimination arising from disability. This does not have to be "because of" a person's disability but need only be "related to" a disability.
- d. Harassment.
- e. Victimisation is where someone is treated less favourably because they have made any allegations with regard discrimination or to the Equality legislation, brought proceedings under the acts, given evidence for or against anyone else under the Acts or otherwise done anything by reference to the Acts.
- f. Associative discrimination – people may suffer discrimination not because of their own protected characteristic but that of someone they with whom they associate.
- g. Discrimination by perception is where someone does not have a protected characteristic but suffer discrimination as if they do e.g. harassment of a person who is perceived to be gay but actually is not.

## **Employment**

### **Positive Action**

While MCT may not positively discriminate in favour of certain groups, it will seek to employ positive action to enable greater representation of underrepresented groups. All job advertisements wherever placed will include the following statement: "We welcome applications from all sections of the community irrespective of gender, marital status, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion/belief, disability or sexual orientation".

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment procedures will be designed to ensure that all stages of the recruitment process conform to the best equality and diversity practice.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be regularly monitored to ensure its effectiveness. A detailed Equality and Diversity Strategy has been developed and should be read in conjunction with this procedure. MCT will implement any changes shown to be required.

### **Grievance/Complaints Procedures**

MCT will treat seriously and take appropriate action should any employee have a grievance or any person raise a complaint as a result of discrimination or harassment.

## **Board of Trustees**

Wherever possible MCT shall actively recruit members of its Board of Trustees to reflect the makeup of its catchment area. The composition of the Board will be monitored annually.

## **Conduct of Meetings**

All meetings will be conducted in a fully participatory manner with equality of access and decision making.

## **Contractors**

When hiring contractors, MCT will ensure that it adheres to the aims and principles of this policy.

## **The services of the organisation**

MCT will actively seek to extend its services to all groups and individuals in the community, and in particular to those who experience discrimination and harassment. MCT will regularly monitor its service delivery and user profile to ensure that its services are fully accessible to all sections of the local community. Should this not be the case then strenuous efforts will be made to rectify the situation.

MCT will seek to ensure that it is accessible to users for whom English is not a first language.

MCT will seek to ensure that it is accessible to users with mobility and sensory disabilities wherever it is possible within financial constraints. This will include ensuring that premises have full disabled access including toilets where possible. MCT will seek to acquire additional facilities to increase its accessibility to users with disabilities.

MCT will ensure as far as possible that its website is accessible for those with sight impairments or who are blind.

## **Oppressive and discriminatory behaviour.**

### **Staff**

MCT believes that, in order to be effective, an equality and diversity policy requires action to be taken against those who discriminate or behave in an oppressive manner. It will not accept behaviour that is racist, sexist, homophobic, or is oppressive towards other disadvantaged groups. Using racist, sexist or homophobic language is one example of such behaviour.

A member of staff behaving in a discriminatory or oppressive manner shall be subject to disciplinary action. Any member of staff can raise any discriminatory or oppressive behaviour with their line manager or formally as a grievance.

Discriminatory or oppressive behaviour by members of staff should be challenged and in appropriate cases could lead to employment being terminated.

### **Service Users and Members of the Public**

Anyone using or attending the Centre who uses racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise oppressive language are always to be challenged by members of staff/trustees.

In less serious cases the person should be informed that this is not acceptable and warned that future incidents will lead to MCT refusing access to the Centre. The Trustee Board is to be informed of all warnings given.

If a person continues with unacceptable behaviour or in more serious incidents the matter should be referred to the Building Management Sub-committee and a decision taken as to whether the person should be banned from the premises.

***The Equality and Diversity Policy informs service delivery in addition to employment policies etc. As such it should be read in conjunction with other policies of the organisation.***