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24/9/07

Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

"Village by Village wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and volunteering. We aim to encourage, value and manage diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population. Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality of opportunity, it is in the best interest of this organisation to recruit and develop the best people for our jobs from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible. That diversity adds value.

In addition we ensure that we are aware of and comply with legislation including the Equal Pay Act 1970, The Race Relations Act 1976 and Amendment 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Sex Discrimination Act 1975."

Doctor Nicholas Swift, Chairman of Village by Village.
Date: 24 September 2007

Introduction

Village by Village recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination. Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through for example exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect (where there is a requirement or condition on all, but which has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified). It's not the intention but the effect we will judge.

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Employees have a duty to co-operate with Village by Village to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees should draw the attention of their supervisor to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

Definitions of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination - is when you treat someone less favourably than others for unlawful means, for example not employing someone because of their gender or disability.

Indirect Discrimination - is when an employer has a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone but might disadvantage a particular group, and which cannot be justified in relation to the job.

Harassment - is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

Victimisation - is when you treat someone less favourably or discriminate against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination.

Positive discrimination - is unlawful.

Positive action - to address imbalances in the workforce is allowed in particular circumstances. Examples would include setting equality targets (but not quotas which are unlawful); encouraging people from particular groups to apply where they are under-represented; training for promotion or skill training for employees from under-represented groups who show potential.

Statement of Intent

Village by Village aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all aspects of their employment at Village by Village.

The organisation's recruitment and selection procedure would include all aspects of ensuring equal opportunities and monitoring and reviewing.

Other policies clearly reflect Village by Village's commitment to equality and diversity, such as those covering discipline, grievance and induction and working environment as well as contract terms and conditions.

Our aim is that the workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society. Selection for employment or promotion or any other benefit will be on the basis of merit and ability only. Selection for training will be on the basis of job requirement only.

Intimidation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action.

Village by Village will challenge discrimination in its own policies. It aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants, employees whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary, volunteers and Management Committee members irrespective of:

gender
marital status
race
ethnic
origin
colour
nationality
national origin
religion or belief
disability
sexual orientation
gender reassignment
age

We work with and around children, this type of work may require employees, volunteers to undertake criminal record disclosure checks and we reserve the right to request two references for each person joining the organisation and request a criminal record disclosure checks.

Implementation

The Chief Officer Neil Kerfoot is responsible for the policy's day-to-day implementation.
Consultation

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. Monitoring and review will take place annually at the AGM.

Each employee, volunteer, consultant, trainer, facilitator or Management Committee member is responsible for his or her own compliance with this policy. Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees, appropriate action against a member of the Management Committee, termination of contracts for services of consultants or trainers, or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.

Grievance & Discipline

Employees who feel they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with their line manager. Initially the manager should aim to resolve the matter informally. It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and easily resolved once the problem is clear.

If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint is very serious, or their line manager is the cause of the complaint, the employee should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal grievance under Village by Village's Grievance & Discipline procedure.

Promotion

The policy will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available and downloadable via Village by Village's website. Village by Village will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, and Management Committee members will also receive Grievance & Discipline procedure as part of their induction.