

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Warwickshire Young Carers recognises that certain individuals and groups suffer discrimination or perceive that they suffer discrimination. Therefore, in line with the principles of social justice and active promotion of genuine equality of opportunity for all, the organisation has developed a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices, the services it provides and the management of its activities.

### Equality Act 2010

Summary of Warwickshire Young Carers approach to the Equality Act 2010:

Discrimination law (Equality Act 2010) protects people against discrimination at work.

The Act defines the different types of discrimination and identifies nine protected characteristics that were covered separately in previous legislation. This helps to strengthen some aspects of equality law. A review of Warwickshire Young Carers policies and procedures has been conducted and updated to reflect the legislative changes and to ensure that fairness is embedded throughout the organisation.

Warwickshire Young Carers' Equality and Diversity Policy ensures that no interviewee, employee, volunteer, client/service user, potential client, cared for person, service provider or member of the public is discriminated against either verbally, physically or by intimidation because of their:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- or any other characteristic that could lead to unfair treatment or prejudice

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and trustees. It covers all aspects of employment including job adverts, recruitment, induction, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of service, training and development, promotion, change management and also grievance and disciplinary issues.

It also applies to the way we manage relationships with our beneficiaries as well as to potential employees.

### Principles

Whilst we fully accept our responsibilities under current legislation, we aim to go beyond this and to:

- recognise that everyone has a right to their distinctive and diverse identity
- have a workforce which generally reflects the beneficiaries we serve
- understand how diversity can improve our ability to deliver better services
- provide services that are responsive to our beneficiaries needs
- provide all employees with the necessary training and development they need to contribute to our goals
- provide a supportive, open environment where employees may use their talents fully and where they are treated fairly and with dignity and respect, in an environment free from abuse or offensive behaviour, bullying or harassment, intimidation or prejudice regardless of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation) or additionally, any impairment, responsibility for dependents, social background or any other individual characteristic which may unfairly affect their opportunities in life

Furthermore, we recognise the benefits of helping our employees to balance the responsibilities of their work and private lives.

Learning to work with people's differences, visible or not, enables us to work together effectively and helps us to anticipate and meet the needs of all of our beneficiaries; to recruit, retain and develop the best people; to fulfil our legal commitments; and to act responsibly in the communities of which we are a part.

### **Actions**

The actions we will take to make this policy work include

- providing training and communications to raise awareness and understanding of diversity and equal opportunities issues, to show their impact on the business and individuals
- ensuring that decisions on recruitment, access to training and promotion are based on ability only
- regularly reviewing our employment policies to ensure that people are treated fairly, equitably and consistently with their skills and abilities
- developing patterns of work which are consistent with the ability to maintain an appropriate work-life balance
- reviewing working arrangements to ensure that they do not restrict the opportunity for employment or career progression of members of disadvantaged groups
- monitoring the composition of our workforce to provide us with robust data to evaluate the effect of our policies
- routinely monitoring all actions under the grievance and disciplinary procedures by gender, race, disability, age and any other criteria we deem to be appropriate
- providing employees who believe they have been treated in any way contrary to this policy with the opportunity to raise and resolve issues

## **Responsibilities**

Trustees' responsibility:

The Board of Trustees has oversight responsibility for ensuring the organisation complies with equality legislation and principles.

Managers' responsibility:

The CEO and any senior leadership have overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

As employers, we are liable for the actions of our employees and workers and therefore all our managers, supervisors and team leaders are responsible for the successful implementation of this policy within their own departments and should take steps to ensure that people working for them understand and follow this policy.

Employees' responsibility:

All our employees are required to comply with this policy, together with our associated policies. Any employee who witnesses behaviour or decisions that seem to be contrary to this policy should challenge these or raise the issue with their line manager.

## **The working environment**

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our working environment does not prevent people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified. This may include physical adaptations or more flexible ways of working, including home working (where appropriate and practical).

## **Employment policies**

Our employment policies and procedures will be continually reviewed to ensure compliance with this policy, to reflect current best practice and to remove barriers experienced by members of disadvantaged social groups seeking employment with us and working for us.

## **Recruitment/work experience**

- We will provide full and fair consideration for all job applicants, based on merit and ability. All managers involved in recruitment will be trained appropriately.
- We will review and develop our recruitment procedures to encourage applications from, and the employment of, people from a range of backgrounds reflecting our client base. Procedures for testing or assessment will be reviewed so as not to disadvantage any applicant.
- We aim to ensure that our recruitment practices are free from unlawful discriminatory criteria. Questions relating to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation), but also current or future family responsibilities, or unrelated criminal convictions will not form part of our selection process. (unless a Genuine Occupational

Requirement applies to the vacant role, or such questions are directly relevant to assessing a candidate's experience of the duties of the particular vacancy).

- We will ensure that other opportunities such as work experience and sandwich placements, where available, are open to people from a wide range of backgrounds and we will work to create good education/industrial links to encourage a broad range of applicants.

### **Training and diversity awareness**

Induction training will be tailored to individual needs but will in all cases include awareness of our diversity policy and how it applies to individuals. We will then continue to take specific steps to raise awareness of diversity throughout the business, initially particularly targeting employees involved in the recruitment and selection process.

Publicity will be developed and disseminated in ways which bring diverse issues to the attention of all employees and those who have dealings with our business. A wide range of cultures will be displayed and celebrated in our publicity material.

### **Career development, training and redeployment**

We recognise that our ability to meet our beneficiaries' diverse needs is improved by having a workforce which has a range of skills and understanding to achieve our objectives. We will take all appropriate steps to ensure that all employees receive fair consideration of their training and development needs and promotion opportunities to enable them to develop their full potential within our charity.

Standard training modules, reference manuals and training materials will be updated where necessary.

Any employees whose circumstances change whilst employed by us (for example, who become disabled, who take maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave, or who face new caring responsibilities) will be given full support to maintain or return to a job appropriate to their experience and abilities.

### **Flexible working**

We will consider any requests for flexible working in a way which aims to balance the needs of the individual and our charity.

### **Involvement**

We encourage the participation of all employees to ensure that, wherever possible, our employment practices recognise and meet their needs and will involve our staff in determining what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work.

### **Harassment**

Harassment includes behaviour that is offensive, frightening or distressing. We have a separate policy on bullying and harassment which makes it clear that such behaviour is totally unacceptable.

In line with the **Workers Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023**, which came into effect on **26 October 2024**, WYC will actively:

- **Take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment** in the workplace.
- **Provide clear procedures** for reporting and handling complaints.
- **Deliver training** to staff and volunteers on identifying and preventing harassment.

Any incidents of discrimination or harassment will be treated **seriously and investigated promptly**, with appropriate action taken.

### **Customer care**

We undertake to listen to our beneficiaries and involve them in the development of services which respect and value their diversity.

### **Monitoring performance**

We will monitor our progress towards diversity by:

- monitoring the ethnic, gender, age and disability profile of our employees to enable us to understand the composition of our workforce to identify any areas of inequality
- monitoring applicants for jobs, training and development, grievances, disciplinary hearings, dismissals and other reasons for leaving
- monitoring employee opinions and comments through an annual employee survey and feedback via the appraisal system
- performance monitoring through beneficiary feedback, surveys, focus groups, and proper investigation of any complaints.

### **Breach of this policy**

Any employee who feels he/she has been treated in a manner contrary to this policy should raise this either formally through the grievance procedure, or informally with their line Manager or the CEO.

Any breaches of this policy by employees will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.