

Telegraph Hill Centre

Equality and Diversity Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Centre recognises that in society and in the neighbourhood power is not held equally and that some sections of the community and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against directly or indirectly on the grounds of (for example but not limited to) race, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, social background, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, learning difficulties and mental illness.

The Centre is actively committed to oppose all forms of discrimination.

The Centre recognises that the local community is multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-faith and believes in providing an environment where diversity can be valued and shared and which every section of the community or individual can participate. The Centre seeks to celebrate and promote this diversity and wishes to see it reflected in its activities.

THE CENTRE'S SERVICES

No individual or User Group will be prevented from using any of Centre's services on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, social background, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, learning difficulties or mental illness (subject to the availability of funds and resources) unless this exclusion can be shown to be justified. There is an obligation on all user groups to adhere to this Policy and comply with the practices set out below except where reasonably justified.

The Centre and User Groups will have an agreed grievance procedure. This procedure will require that where a grievance is raised on an issue of equal opportunities there will be access to an independent panel agreed by both parties, the members of which have not previously been involved but who are sensitive to the issues. The panel's ruling will be binding on both parties. Independent User Groups will be expected to use the Centre's grievance procedure, or to implement their own procedure conforming to these guidelines.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the policy is to ensure that no present or future employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements of employment on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, social background, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, learning difficulties or mental illness, which cannot be shown to be lawfully justified.

APPOINTMENT OF PAID STAFF

Recruitment advertisements will state that the Centre is an equal opportunities employer. Posts will be advertised in places to which people who are disadvantaged have access. It may be necessary to positively encourage under-represented sections of the community by advertising in local and ethnic press, Job Centres, local newsletters and community organisations.

When recruitment is required, the Management Committee will select an Appointment Panel comprising chiefly of people who understand the job to be done, but which also pays due regard to the balance of sex and ethnic origin in the section of the community which the employee will serve. All members of an Appointment Panel must have received relevant training before advertising the post.

Short listing will be done by all members of the panel.

Informal visits by the applicant before appointment may be used only for giving information about the post and Centre and for answering any questions from the applicant.

On interview questions will be restricted to those related to suitability for the post and personal questions which are not relevant to the post will be avoided.

A record will be made relating to each applicant of the reasons for not short listing, rejection or the offer of appointment as appropriate.

SUPPORT TO STAFF

If a person with special needs is appointed every reasonable effort will be made to meet those needs within the time period specified in his or her contract.

All staff will have access to in-service training regardless of disability, age, social background, sex or sexual orientation, so as to help career development.

The Centre recognises that staff from a section of the community suffering discrimination may need to attend external meetings. The Centre will not attempt to prevent attendance at such meetings in the worker's own time.

VOLUNTEERS

The Equal Opportunities Policy will apply equally to volunteers. Care will be taken in the selection of volunteers and acceptance of offers of help to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, social background, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, learning difficulties or mental illness, unless it can be shown to be lawfully justified.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Management Committee will seek to ensure that its membership reflects the diversity of the local community and if necessary positive steps will be taken to encourage participation by any section of the community, which at any one time is under-represented on the Management Committee.

The Centre recognises that it is not the responsibility of those staff, volunteers or User Groups from a section of the community that suffers discrimination, to raise issues about policies and practices. They work, or are otherwise involved, for specific purposes not necessarily relating to such discrimination or the provision of equal opportunities and should not be diverted from those purposes to raise such issues. It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and User Groups to support and carry out this equal opportunities policy: they will not leave implementation to those who have been discriminated against.

If the Management Committee, the co-ordinators, or both see that a User group (or the centre) is out of line with the policy, or is going that way, they will work with that Group (or the Centre) to put things right, and if necessary take appropriate action to effect compliance