

Diversity Policy

North Devon Hospice deems that discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the hospice and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the hospice to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on the grounds of age, disability, gender identity, gender expression, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership (including same sex partnerships), pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics). Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee and volunteer feels respected and able to give of their best.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and/or unfair discrimination, victimization, bullying and harassment. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.

Our staff and volunteers will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass patients or their families, volunteers, colleagues, visitors or customers because of any protected characteristic, in the provision of our services.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Chief Executive. Directors and Managers will ensure that they and their staff and volunteers operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each manager will ensure that:

- all their staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

Human Resources will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic audits. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of volunteers.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and volunteers and the attitudes of staff and volunteers are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment and volunteering practices. In particular, all members of staff and volunteers should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff, volunteers or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

OUR COMMITMENT

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and volunteers are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and volunteer is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff and where applicable, to volunteers.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice.
- We will review all our employment and volunteering practices and procedures to ensure fairness, on a regular basis.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with employee representatives.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The hospice attaches particular importance to the needs of people with disabilities. Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee or volunteer who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working/volunteering hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice and guidance from the HR Department and external agencies to maintain people with disabilities in employment or volunteering);
- include people with disabilities in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to people with disabilities who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

MONITORING

- The hospice deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.
- We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance, Performance Management (Capability) and the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- If monitoring shows that the hospice, or areas within it, is not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the hospice, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

TRAINING: As part of the induction programme new staff and volunteers complete statutory training which includes a session on equality and diversity. Existing staff and volunteers have refresher training at least every three years where full information is given on equality issues. Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive coaching from HR in addition to the sessions included as part of their induction programme.

COMPLAINTS: Employees have a right to make a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the hospice Grievance Procedure. Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the hospice Disciplinary Procedure. Volunteers have a right to make a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.

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