Coniston Community Association
Equality and Diversity policy

Introduction and aims of the policy

Coniston Community Association recognises and values people’s differences and will assist them to use their talents to reach their full potential.

The organisation will do all it can to ensure it recruits, trains and promotes people based on qualifications, experience and abilities for all roles within the organisation. This policy is designed to ensure that Coniston Community Association complies with its obligations under equality legislation and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.

Coniston Community Association is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (defined as Protected Characteristics as in the Equalities Act 2010).

Using fair and objective employment practices, the organisation aims to ensure that

* all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment
* all employees (volunteers/service users) have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour. Such behaviour may come from other employees or by people (third parties) who are not employees of Coniston Community Association, such as customers or clients
* all employees (volunteers/service users) have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair discrimination
* all employees (volunteers/service users) have the right to be free from discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic or because others perceive that they have a particular Protected Characteristic, even if they do not.

Scope of the policy

The policy applies to:

* Job applicants
* Employees
* Agency temps
* Students on work experience or placements
* Volunteers including trustees
* Service users

The policy applies to all stages of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion and training.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Management and the Trustee Board together to develop and lead the implementation of the equality and diversity policy.

Responsibility for approving the policy and monitoring that it is being followed rests with Management and the Trustee Board.

Employees and volunteers (including trustees) of Coniston Community Association have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed and to draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Implementation of the policy

All staff, trustees and volunteers will be involved in creating an equality environment and one that values diversity.

Communications

Communication of the policy to job applicants and employees/ volunteers through:

* Making available a copy of the policy to prospective applicants
* Ensuring all new starters have the opportunity to discuss the policy with line manager(s)
* Making use of team meetings and office hours to discuss the policy and defining areas where practice could be improved
* Providing non-discrimination selection training for those who are recruiting
* Providing Equality and Diversity training and guidance to staff and volunteers (including trustees)
* Including reference to abiding by the policy in staff terms and conditions/ volunteer agreements
* Incorporating specific responsibilities into job/role descriptions

Working with partners

In selecting our partners we will consider their commitment to Equality and Diversity by:

* Asking to see their policy
* Asking what they do in practice
* Asking how and how often the monitor their adopted policy

Users of our service

We will make our services accessible by:

* Considering formats for promotional material
* Appropriate use of language/formats/fonts/size
* Considering whether information should be available in alternative formats e.g. easy read / other languages
* Considering locations where the organisation’s services are promoted /advertised
* Considering accessibility of locations from which the service is provided
* Considering the diverse make up of our staff/ volunteers in relation to your service users
* Considering the impact of proposed new services on the user group
* Considering any additional equipment/resources/software that may need to be provided

In carrying out the policy, the organisation will carry out the following actions:

* Particular attention will be placed on the following
- Use of selection criteria that does not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and/or promotion procedures
- Requiring entry to employment/volunteering or progression within it to be based on merit.
- Not discriminating in opportunities for recruitment, training, promotion or transfer of employees or volunteers
- Ensuring that every individual is assessed according to their personal capability to carry out a given job/role/task
- Ensure that all employees are given equal treatment with regard to terms and conditions of employment, provided they do the same or broadly similar work, or work of equal value
- Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the operation of grievance and disciplinary procedures
* Ensure that all relevant requirements of the Equality Act in relation to disability are met and adhered to. This will include making reasonable adjustments to ensure access to employment or volunteering tasks and opportunities.
* Ensure that any amendments to any legislation relating to discrimination are met and adhered to.

This policy is reflected in the following policies within the organisation:

* Recruitment
* Learning and Development
* Disciplinary and Grievances
* Safeguarding

Reporting discrimination/potential discrimination

Employees who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue through the following means:

* Raising a complaint with their designated line manager
* Following our adopted grievance procedure

Volunteers who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue through the following means:

* Raising a complaint with their designated line manager
* Following our adopted grievance procedure

Service users who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should:

* Inform Management of said discrimination
* Raise a complaint with the group/party if a separate user and follow their adopted grievances procedure and ascertain a copy of their equality and diversity policy.

Employees/volunteers/service users (include/delete as appropriate) should also use this approach if they feel that they been the subject of harassment from someone who is not an employee of Coniston Community Association. Coniston Community Association will not tolerate any harassment from third parties towards its employees/volunteers/service users and will take appropriate action to prevent it happening again.

If an employee/volunteer/service user (include/delete as appropriate) witnesses behaviour that they find offensive in relation to age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, even if it is not directed at them they should also use this procedure.

**Empowerment and anti-oppressive practice**

Empowerment can be defined as enabling service users to take action to improve their lives. From the point of view of service users, practitioners are often in positions of considerable power, particularly where decisions are being made about the delivery of services and around intervention in people's lives.

To practice empowerment, our staff team will need to focus on working with service users to engage them in the problem-solving process.

Empowerment is linked with anti-oppressive practice, in that the staff team can work with service users to enable them to overcome barriers to solving problems – whether located in the attitudes and practices of professionals and social institutions (for example, health and education authorities) or in the beliefs of the service user.

The worker's knowledge of service provision and the law can be critical in empowering service users.

Anti-oppressive practice is ‘about a process of change which leads (service users) from feeling powerless to powerful’ (Dalrymple and Burke, 1995).

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored to judge to what extent it is working and identify areas for improvement.

Monitoring will relate to both employees/volunteers and to service users and methods used will include:

* Ascertaining diversity data of employees/volunteers (including trustees) against the fields of recruitment, training, promotion, and leavers.
* Recording information, such as location and how they heard about our services from our service users.
* Keeping a record of our provided services

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Management and trustees in order to ensure that it remains up to date and reflects the needs and practices of the organisation.

The policy may also be reviewed if legislation changes or if monitoring information suggests that policy or practices should be altered.

Date of adoption of policy 24/11/2021
Date of review 24/11/2023

Date of next review 24/11/2025