The Women’s Centre Cornwall

Equality and Diversity Policy

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Introduction

Purpose and aim of policy

This Equality and Diversity Policy is a statement of how The Women's Centre Cornwall intends to promote equality, and tackle discrimination, victimisation and harassment. It is necessary for the organisation to have an Equality of Opportunity Policy for the following reasons:

- Disadvantage and discrimination exists in society;
- Some people are unfairly denied equal access to services or employment (or both);
- Discrimination and disadvantage undermine the quality of life for many people in Cornwall including our service users.
- People often experience multiple-discrimination.

This Equality and Diversity Policy demonstrates our commitment to address this imbalance. It will help us to ensure that all women have equal access to our services and to employment and volunteering with The Women’s Centre Cornwall. It will help us with our aim to raise the quality of life of women who live and work in Cornwall.

The Women’s Centre Cornwall will ensure that it meets its legal duties and will assess how its policies, procedures and services can meet the needs of vulnerable women in the community. Managers, employees and volunteers will work so that equality is at the heart of our organisation. We will improve equality practice at a managerial level and service level and aim to ensure:

- that all The Women's Centre Cornwall services, are accessible to all women & girls, who need the service, from every background
- The Women’s Centre Cornwall policies are fair and do not discriminate against those from “protected characteristic” groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010
- that The Women’s Centre Cornwall staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities, in relation to service provision and in the workplace

Scope

This Equality and Diversity Policy is a statement of how we intend to promote equality and tackle discrimination and harassment. We will work towards ending discrimination, including stopping victimisation and harassment on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010: -

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NEXT REVIEW Sept 2018
· Age
· Disability
· Race
· Religion or Belief (and those with none)
· Sex (formally known as gender)
· Sexual Orientation
· Gender Reassignment
· Marriage and Civil Partnership
· Pregnancy and Maternity Status

Or on the grounds of someone’s:

· Political Belief
· Economic or social background
· Trade Union Activities
· Caring responsibilities for children or someone who is disabled or elderly

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of The Women's Centre Cornwall

We will also be working with our stakeholders, contractors and partners, to influence their policies and ensure their practices reflect the objectives set out in this policy.

Policy Statement

The Women's Centre Cornwall is committed to promoting equality and diversity and tackling social exclusion in all operations of the organisation and the services it provides.

The Women’s Centre Cornwall recognises equality duties under legislation, in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy.

Equality in the delivery of services

The Women’s Centre Cornwall is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and aims to create the best possible quality of life for women and girls who live or work in Cornwall.

We will achieve this by:
· Recognising and accepting that particular individuals or groups are denied equality through intentional and unintentional discrimination;
· Providing regular training for all volunteers, employees and trustees, so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people and any key legislative developments
· Ensuring that people have the opportunity to engage with and participate in the planning and delivery of services;
· Delivering services which are relevant, of the highest possible quality and accessible;

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· Providing clear information about our services and where necessary, in a variety of formats;
· Consulting with our partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) equality group to share in the Cornwall wide objectives; appendix 1
· Ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are effective and accessible to all particularly those identified as having protected characteristics.
· Assessing the impact of and monitoring our services to ensure that they do not discriminate and to identify areas where improvements can be made;
· Ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to, equality in service provision and in the workplace;
· Ensure that the work of The Women’s Centre Cornwall’s internal Equality and Diversity Group is valued at all levels of the organisation and that the group’s recommendations are evaluated and implemented
· Encouraging our partnership agencies to contribute to the implementation of this policy.

Equality in Employment

The Women’s Centre Cornwall is committed to ensuring that we provide equality of opportunity to all in our employment. We need a workforce, which reflects the area of the community we serve to make sure that we provide appropriate services to all our diverse communities. We will work to ensure that we do not unfairly discriminate against any job applicant or employee for any reason.

All managers with recruiting responsibilities will receive training in fair recruitment and selection procedures.

The Women’s Centre Cornwall will use positive action to put right past inequalities in the workplace and in how we provide services.

We will achieve this by:
· Ensuring that our recruitment and selection policies and procedures are equitable and fair.
· Only considering applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, skills and abilities whilst giving due consideration to the ‘Genuine Occupational Qualification’ (GOQ) that exists for posts;
· Shortlist and offer interview opportunity to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum (essential) criteria of the post;
· Using appropriate lawful methods, including positive action, to address the under-representation of any group which The Women’s Centre Cornwall identifies as being under-represented in particular types of jobs;
· Ensuring that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time or employed on a temporary basis;
· Ensuring that employment policies and opportunities are of the highest possible quality, therefore equality, equity and consistency are embedded in practices, pay and conditions;
· Making sure that we give equal consideration to people’s needs and develop flexible and responsive employment opportunities to tackle those needs;
· Encouraging and supporting employees to reach their full potential within the resources we have available to us;
· Taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination, and offering support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents; and
· Taking disciplinary action against employees who discriminate against people who work for The Women’s Centre Cornwall or who seek employment we will take action (including legal action if appropriate) against employees who are found guilty of harassment.

**Employee Monitoring**
The Women’s Centre Cornwall has recognised that equality monitoring is an important way of assessing our services. Monitoring is an essential part of tackling inequality and discrimination and, if done effectively, will help us check whether our policies, services and organisational culture are meeting the needs of our employees and community.

Any data collected will be analysed and reported on and can be used within The Women’s Centre Cornwall for:
· Setting targets
· Reviewing our service delivery by comparing our performance over time
· Developing services and assisting with making changes

The Women’s Centre Cornwall will monitor employees on the basis of their age, disability, race, religion or belief (and those with none), sex (formally known as gender), sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity status in the following areas:
· Training and development
· Promotion and career development
· Outcome of performance and competency assessments
· Disciplinary procedures and grievances
· Those leaving The Women’s Centre Cornwall’s employment

Equality monitoring data is subject to the Data Protection Act.

**Procurement and Contractors**

The Women’s Centre Cornwall will ensure that:
· Contractors and providers have Equality & Diversity policy, procedures and practices that do not discriminate;
· We or those acting on our behalf will develop and deliver services, goods and facilities that are appropriate and accessible;
· We will monitor any contracts and/or commissioning arrangements we have in place to ensure they meet our Equality & Diversity commitments

**Management and Supervision of this Policy**

Strong leadership is essential to ensure that this policy is embedded at strategic and service levels of The Women’s Centre Cornwall. The The Women’s Centre Cornwall Chief Executive has responsibility for Equality and Diversity and its implementation.

All Trustees have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that the principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process.

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Implementation
All employees have a responsibility to implement this policy in service provision and employment. Managers will determine what resources will be required to co-ordinate and support promoting this policy and delivering on equality priorities and objectives.

All employees and volunteers will receive a summary of this Equality and Diversity Policy when they start working for The Women’s Centre Cornwall and the policy will have been discussed as part of the induction process. Managers have a duty to pass on information on Equality of Opportunity, equality training and complaints procedures to employees and to include equality in all employee induction, supervision and appraisal processes. The Women’s Centre Cornwall will ensure that employees and Trustees have appropriate training and awareness of equality and diversity, ensuring that individual behaviours and performance are appropriate and don’t adversely impact on individuals or groups.

To comply with this policy, all employees and Trustees must:
· Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity;
· Report any suspected discriminatory incidents or behaviours;
· Not influence or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination or harassment;
· Not victimise or harass anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination, harassment or bullying;
· Not harass abuse or intimidate others on account of any of the nine protected characteristics;
· Not lobby job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying or taking up a post; and
· When developing new or changing existing plans, policies or procedures, must carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). A record of the outcome of all EIA conducted will be kept by The Women’s Centre Cornwall.

Consultation and Engagement
Consultation and engagement enables an assessment to be made of the views of those who are affected by this policy. It does not mean just a general advertising of intended changes and a request for comments, but includes positive efforts to identify and engage in dialogue with those people/groups within the "9 Protected Characteristics" who are potentially affected. It helps the organisation to become aware of issues and problems that various groups face, including young people, people with disabilities, people whose first language is not English and people from a range of backgrounds and ethnic origins (both in the community and our internal staff), which the organisation might not otherwise discover. Consultation and engagement with communities and staff provides an important means of enabling those who may be adversely affected by the policy to participate in the process.

The following stakeholders were consulted during the development of this policy:

The VCS E & D Group, staff and volunteers, The Women’s Centre Cornwall’s Equality and Diversity Group and Trustees.

Responsibilities
All employees are responsible to and bound by the Equality of Opportunity Policy. All Trustees are individually and personally bound by the Policy;

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This means that employees and Trustees must not discriminate, harass or intimidate people because of any of the protected characteristics set out above. Every employee/volunteer is required to assist The Women’s Centre Cornwall to meet its commitment to provide Equality of Opportunity in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or clients are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under The Women’s Centre Cornwall’s disciplinary procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

**Monitoring arrangements**

The Women’s Centre Cornwall will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our Equality of Opportunity policy. The effectiveness of our Equality of Opportunity policy will be reviewed regularly in consultation with stakeholders and action taken as necessary. For example, if monitoring identifies under representation of a particular group we shall develop an action plan aimed at addressing this imbalance.

**Breaches of Policy**

Breaches of this Policy will be handled through The Women’s Centre Cornwall’s Complaint Policy and Employee Disciplinary Procedures depending on the nature of breach. Legal action may be taken forward where appropriate.

**Information and training**

Employees, part-time, full-time or fixed term contract will be provided with appropriate training, which will take into account individual needs based on the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The Women’s Centre Cornwall will:

- Seek to ensure that all employees are developed by the provision of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities in line with organisational needs.
- Provide training that complies with this policy
- Include equalities training as part of its induction programme.
- Include equalities training as part of volunteer training.
- Include equalities training as part of its management development programme.
- Include equalities as part of Trustee development.

**Legal requirements**

Over and above the provisions set out in its own policy and procedures, The Women’s Centre Cornwall is also bound by the legal responsibilities as detailed within the Equality Act (2010)

**Authorisation, Approval and Review dates**

REVIEWED Sept 2017
NEXT REVIEW Sept 2018
This Policy will be subject to review every six months.

This Policy will also be reviewed in the instance of significant changes to equality legislation or national equality policy to ensure that it is current and compliant.

Alternate Formats

We want to ensure that your needs are met.
If you need this information in any other format or translated into a language other than English, please contact:

The Women’s Centre Cornwall
PO Box 39
Bodmin
Cornwall
PL31 1XF

Tel: 01208 76466

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glossary of Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.</td>
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<td>Disability</td>
<td>A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>A man or a woman.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion &amp; Belief</td>
<td>Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Whether a persons’ sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glossary of Terms</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Reassignment</td>
<td>The process of transitioning or proposing to transition or having undergone a process of transition from one gender to another (e.g. from a man to a woman or woman to man). A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under the Equality Act 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy and Maternity</td>
<td>Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</td>
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<td>Marriage and Civil Partnership</td>
<td>Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters</td>
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<td>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</td>
<td>Publicly funded bodies have a legal obligation to assess both existing and new policies, procedures and functions. An EIA is a way to ensure that policies, plans, procedures and functions of an organisation are considered to identify any unmet needs, and provide a basis for action to improve services where appropriate. It systematically assesses and records the actual, potential or likely impact of a service, policy, project or plan on different groups of people. EIA’s should be made available upon request.</td>
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<td>Glossary of Terms</td>
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<td>Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ)</td>
<td>A GOQ applies where there is an exception under the relevant legislation, and can specify the recruitment, training, promotion or transfer of a person of a particular gender, race, ethnic group or religion by claiming that it amounts to a GOQ for the post in question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Equality is about respect and not treating an individual or group of people unfairly. It is about giving people and equality of opportunity to goods and services and to fulfil their potential. Equality is therefore based on fairness while recognising that everyone is different. Equality is the desire to underpin human relationships with values and actions that open up the chance to develop and engage human potential, unrestricted by limitation of prejudice and stereotypes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Diversity is about all the ways that people differ and recognising that those differences are a natural part of society. Diversity is about treating people as individuals and making them feel respected and valued. Diversity is concerned with all the ways in which people differ arising from differences in age, social background, education, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.</td>
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<td>Direct discrimination</td>
<td>A person who has, or is associated with someone who has, or believed to have, a protected characteristic is treated less favourably than someone who does not.</td>
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<td>Indirect discrimination</td>
<td>A policy applied in the same way for everyone that particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glossary of Terms</td>
<td>Victimisation</td>
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| Victimisation     |              | · labelling the person, a ‘troublemaker’  
|                   |              | · denying them opportunities or services they would normally have (such as a promotion at work)  
|                   |              | · ignoring them. |