

# CHRISTIANS TOGETHER CALDERDALE



## Equal Opportunities Policy

Date approved: 6 Mar 2017

### Policy Statement

Christians Together Calderdale (CTC) is committed to Equal Opportunities and believes that all should be treated equally, with equal opportunities and strives for high standards as an organisation in doing so. We recognise the value that diversity brings and welcome staff, volunteers and service users from all backgrounds, aiming to create an environment where all feel respected and valued. CTC will make any reasonable adjustments to working practises, equipment and premises to ensure all can take a full and active part in our work. We will work to ensure that all our policies and practises do not discriminate either directly or indirectly.

This policy provides guidance to all volunteers, staff, trustees and service users. Through planning, training and monitoring it ensures that we all work together to achieve our commitment to Equal Opportunities, diversity and compliance with legislation and also provides a framework for dealing with any anti-discriminatory behaviour.

The policy is accessible to all on the charity's website and will be reviewed annually by the governing body.

### Legislation

CTC will not discriminate on the basis of the protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act: gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity.

In addition the organisation also seeks to promote equal opportunities in terms of class, HIV status, nationality, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions or union activities, political, mental health or caring responsibilities.

It is however recognised that in some instances there is a requirement of a role to have (or not have) a particular protected 'characteristic' i.e. a female support worker working solely with vulnerable women or a role on a prayer support team requiring someone to have a Christian faith. Where this applies it will be clearly indicated on the role description or job advert and comply with legislation. This is covered more fully in our Recruitment Policy.

### Responsibilities

The Trustees have overall responsibility for this policy and implementation, but may delegate aspects of its implementation and monitoring to project management teams. Project Managers should ensure that staff and volunteers in their teams are aware of the policy and are operating within it.

Where a conflict arises between equality and safeguarding, the safety of staff, volunteers and service users would be paramount. Any such conflicts must be discussed with a trustee and the reasons for any decisions made documented.

### Equal Opportunities for Service Users

CTC is a Christian organisation but is open to all who are in need regardless of faith, background or current circumstances. We recognise that many of our service users experience discrimination elsewhere and are committed to supporting all those who need our help, including, where appropriate, advocating their needs to other organisations. The only people not allowed to access our services are those who have breached our Code of Conduct and been advised by the trustees of the charity that they are barred,

or those who after a risk assessment are found to be a serious risk to others. In some instances an alternative service may be offered, but this will be at the trustees' discretion and decided on a case by case basis.

### **Compliance**

It is expected that all trustees, staff, volunteers and service users will comply with this policy. Anyone found not acting in line with this guidance or acting in a discriminatory way will be subject to disciplinary action in line with our disciplinary policies.

### **Diversity in our workforce**

#### **Volunteers**

Most of our projects are staffed by volunteers and those from all backgrounds are welcome to apply to help with our projects and subject to background checks and ability, most will be matched to roles they are interested in. A Christian ethos underpins all the work done by CTC, but volunteers are welcome from all faiths and none. It is expected however that our ethos is respected by all, likewise it is expected that there is mutual respect for those with other beliefs, valuing the diversity they bring and contribution that is made.

#### **Helpers**

Service users often want to become involved with volunteering and we recognise the benefits to them in doing so. We value the insight that someone who has first-hand experience of the issues faced by those we help gives us and this can often shape the way we work. A decision will be made by the project management whether those who are still in a chaotic lifestyle, living with an addiction or in recovery from addiction are ready and suitable to volunteer. The helper role was developed for those who need more support and supervision or were unable to commit to a full volunteer role.

#### **Paid Staff**

Paid staff are recruited in line with our Recruitment Policy on the basis of their skills, professional background and ability to do a role. Any 'protected characteristics' as outlined in the 2010 Equality Act will be clearly indicated on the job advert.

#### **Management Teams**

Each project is managed by a team comprising volunteers, trustees and staff to provide leadership and direction. Each management team should be made up of those who have the skills required, the interest in the project and an appreciation of the issues faced by those who are being helped. Where possible, past service users should either be included as a formal member of the management team or be involved informally to contribute to service planning.

#### **Trustees**

CTC is an ecumenical Christian Charity not affiliated to one church denomination. The nature of business registered with Companies House is 'Activities of religious organisations' and the charitable objectives registered with The Charities Commission is 'To advance the understanding and practice of the Christian faith in Halifax and the surrounding area'. As such, trustees would normally have a Christian faith, but it is recognised that skills, professional background or awareness of the issues faced by service users are also important factors and if required, to ensure the right skills set are in place, an individual without a Christian faith may be invited to serve as a trustee or on a sub-committee of trustees.

#### **Recruitment**

Full details of our recruitment practices can be found in the CTC Recruitment Policy. To ensure open and fair recruitment, all our job adverts and volunteering opportunities are advertised on our website, across our social media sites and by the local voluntary support organisations. The selection and interview

process is done in an objective manner by a number of people based on the role requirements and person specification by people who have undertaken equality training.

### **Reasonable arrangements for those with disabilities**

The charity will make any reasonable adjustments to the building, facilities or the way we work in order to provide a service or allow employment or volunteering opportunities for those with disabilities to allow an equal opportunity to participate. Project management teams should plan future service development with this in mind.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

To ensure there is equality in service provision and to measure the effectiveness of this policy, each project team should undertake regular monitoring of volunteers and service users either as a regular exercise (i.e. annually) or on an ongoing basis. Feedback from service users should also be obtained to provide the opportunity for raising any issues relating to equality. Any equality issues or incidents involving discrimination should be discussed at project meetings and reported to the trustees using the incident logging process and should also be included on the Trustee Operational Report.

### **Training**

Equality issues will be included in induction training for all volunteer roles. All staff, trustees, and key volunteers should also undertake more in depth Equality training either by participating in an external course run by one of the voluntary sector support organisations, or online on the ACAS website: <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2113> by registering you can access a free Equality and Diversity course.

### **Christian activities**

As a Christian organisation we hold a number of Christian activities on site including Saturday and Thursday Gathering. These are open to all, but attendance is entirely voluntary and paid staff would normally attend in their own time. There may be instances where it is beneficial for staff to provide support to clients or guests at these services, unless this has been stipulated as a requirement of the role, this would not be mandatory and should be agreed with a line manager.

Some of our projects or meetings start with a short time of prayer or worship. Being present for this is optional and if a staff member or volunteer prefers not to be present for this, they are welcome to join the meeting after this time.

### **Bullying and Harassment and Victimisation**

**Bullying:** *behaviour that is: repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally, often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation*

**Harassment:** *unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended.*

**Victimisation:** *the action of singling someone out for cruel or unjust treatment (particularly if related to a 'protected act')*

Anyone behaving in a manner that amounts to bullying, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated and be dealt with in line with the appropriate disciplinary policy.

### **Complaints and Grievances**

Any complaints by service users should be handled in line with the guidance in the Feedback and Complaints Policy.

If a staff member or volunteer has a complaint relating to equality or discrimination, the CTC grievance policies should be followed.