

HEART EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



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FACEBOOK

HEART Hastings Emergency Action Resilience team

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



The following details our Equal Opportunity Policy for HEART volunteers to use as a reference and resource, when they are needed.

HEART is fully committed to making sure we have fair and rigorous policies and procedures in place, both for the people we support and our volunteers.

A) STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. HEART recognises that we live in a society where discrimination still operates to the disadvantage of many groups in society.
2. HEART believes that all persons should have equal rights to recognition of their human dignity, and to have equal opportunities to be educated, to work, receive services and to participate in society.
3. HEART is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in all that we do, including the way we manage the organisation and provide services to the community.

In order to express this commitment, we develop, promote and maintain policies that will be conducive to the principles of fairness and equality in recruitment of any staff, volunteers and our service users.

4. The objective of this policy is that no person should suffer or experience less favourable treatment, discrimination or lack of opportunities on the grounds of sex, race, , nationality, ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, health status, HIV status,

disability status, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, political beliefs or trade union membership, class, responsibility for dependents, physical attributes, ex-offender status as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, lack of formal qualifications where such qualifications are not required, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justifiable for the operation of our work.

5. This policy will influence and affect every aspect of activities carried out at HEART i.e. promotional work, support to individuals and organisations and any work we develop in the future, as determined by the management committee.
6. In the provision of services and the employment of staff, HEART is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone. Throughout its activities, HEART will treat all people equally whether they are:
 - Seeking or using our services.
 - Applying for a job or already employed by us.
 - Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements.
 - Volunteer workers.

B) HOW THE POLICY IS IMPLEMENTED AND WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE

The Management Committee has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each Project Lead (whether paid or voluntary) has these responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants, volunteers and relevant others.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in nondiscriminatory selection techniques.
- Incorporate equal opportunity notices into general communications practices.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfill the objectives of the policy. This may take the form of sharing best practice and experience within the team and the wider network rather than and in addition to formal training sessions.
- Formally review progress at least once a year, amending policy and/or practice if necessary.

CONDUCT AND GENERAL STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

All staff and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. HEART will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- making threats
- physical violence
- shouting
- swearing at others
- persistent rudeness
- isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- telling offensive jokes or name calling
- displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist / racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email / text message or any other format.
- any other forms of harassment or victimisation.

The items on the above list of unacceptable behaviours are considered to be disciplinary offences within HEART and will usually lead to disciplinary action being taken.

The outcome of which could be requirement for training or education or, where sufficiently serious, considered gross misconduct, suspension or even dismissal.

HEART does, however, encourage staff and volunteers to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances.

However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff and others in our organisation who may have caused offence to

understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive.

It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

Notwithstanding the above, if investigation reveals vexatious complaints, we would consider this also to be subject to disciplinary action.

Again, we would always aim to start with discussion and education and to seek resolution.

COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION

HEART will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, trustees, clients or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by staff, volunteers, clients and other third parties.

C) LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DISCRIMINATION (EQUALITY ACT 2010)

The 2010 Equality Act replaces all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales Under this Act protected characteristics are:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race , religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In valuing diversity HEART is committed to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality.

The EQUALITY ACT 2010 harmonises, strengthens and replaces most previous equality legislation. The following legislation is still relevant:

- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Work and Families Act 2006.
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).

D) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

1. The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees, making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

2. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
3. Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications within which, recognition of life experience within one or more of the protected characteristics may be included. Shortlisting will be done without using applicants' names.
4. We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
5. All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do their job.
6. Short-listing and interviewing will be carried out by a Panel of at least 3 people, that will be as diverse as possible.
7. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
8. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

E) MONITORING

1. We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

Monitoring may involve:

The collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applications and current employees;

The examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and

Recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

2. The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

HEART will revise and review this policy regularly.

