



## Equality and Diversity Policy

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# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1 Statement

Volunteer Centre Dorset (VCD) exists to promote and develop volunteering for all within Dorset. As an employer and provider of services, VCD is committed to recognising diversity and providing equal opportunity for all. VCD acknowledges that the UK is socially diverse in race, culture, beliefs, religions and sexual orientation and that no person or group of people should suffer discrimination or lack of opportunity, based on personal characteristics.

## 2 The Law

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Act sets out these 'protected characteristics' :

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity – including Breastfeeding**
- **Race** (colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins, including Gypsies and Travellers).
- **Religion** - including no religion
- **Belief** - including any religious or philosophical belief or no belief.
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation – (LGBTQI+)**

In addition to these 'protected characteristics,' VCD will not discriminate on grounds of:

- **Political persuasion**

- **Trade Union Activity**
- **Unrelated Criminal convictions (those working with vulnerable people will be DBS checked)**

### **3 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 is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training in equality and diversity will be provided for all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- To regularly reviewed Employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by the trustees of VCD.
- To ensure that all services to voluntary organisations are provided in a way which promotes awareness of the rights and needs of people from underrepresented groups and enables all people to have access to them.
- To ensure that VCD committees, working parties, volunteer recruitment, staffing and terms and conditions of employment reflect a range of needs and interests of people from under-represented groups.

## 4 Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination, rests with **all staff and volunteers** and their attitudes are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices and provision of services. Everyone 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 members, volunteers or service users who have, or are perceived to have, one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual or group is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform the Office Manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

**Office Manager and Trustees** will ensure that:

- they and the staff operate within this policy and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid inequality and discrimination.
- all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning inequality and discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible in accordance with VCD's Grievance, Disciplinary and Harassment and Bullying Policies;
- appropriate records are maintained.

### Third Party Harassment

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee or volunteer is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or service users. VCD will not tolerate such actions against its staff, volunteers or service users and the employee or volunteer concerned should inform their manager /

supervisor at once that this has occurred. VCD will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

## **5 Review**

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner in accordance with 'good practice,' or if a change in legislation should occur.

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## **6 Other VCD Policies relevant to this policy**

Harassment & Bullying Policy

Grievance Policy

Disciplinary Policy

## **7 References**

**This document was compiled with reference to the following sources:**

UK Government Equality Act (2010)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/equality-and-diversity>

ACAS

<https://www.acas.org.uk/equality>

Citizens Advice Bureau

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/protected-characteristics/>

Human Resource Solutions

[https://www.human-resource-solutions.co.uk/HR-Policy-Pages/Equality/Document\\_Management\\_Equality.html](https://www.human-resource-solutions.co.uk/HR-Policy-Pages/Equality/Document_Management_Equality.html)

This Policy was endorsed by the Board of Trustees on :

Date:

Signed

Position

Review Date :