**Shama Women’s Centre**

**Equality and Diversity Policy**

## Aims of this Policy

Shama Women’s Centre 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 Shama Women’s Centre complies with its obligations under equality legislation and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.

Shama Women’s Centre 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). However it is exempt with regards to gender, as it is a women’s centre it recruits women only.

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 and 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 third parties who are not employees of Shama Women’s Centre, such as training providers or other providers of services to the Centre.
* All employees, volunteers and 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 and 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.

1. **Scope of the Policy**

The policy applies to:

* *Job applicants*
* *Employees*
* *Volunteers including Committee Members*
* *Learners(Students)*
* *Students on work experience or placements*
* *Service Users*

Discrimination comes in many forms and includes:

**2.1 Direct discrimination** is when an employee or applicant is treated less favourably than someone else because of their:

* sex
* marriage or civil partnership
* gender reassignment
* pregnancy and maternity leave
* sexual orientation
* disability
* race
* religion or belief
* age

and that there is no genuine occupation requirement for it. People also must not be discriminated against because they are on a part time or fixed term contract

**2.2 Indirect discrimination**

This is where there is a working condition, practice or rule that disadvantages one group of people more than another. In other words it is more difficult for people from one group to comply with the requirement. Even if it is done accidentally indirect discrimination is unlawful. Indirect discrimination is only allowed if it is necessary for the way the business works, and there is no other way of achieving it.

**2.3 Discrimination arising from disability**

This is where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability where it cannot be objectively justified. This only applies where the organisation knew or could reasonably be expected to know that the person was disabled.

**2.4 Associative Discrimination**

This is where someone is treated worse than someone else because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.

**2.5 Perceptive Discrimination**

This is where someone is treated worse than someone else because there has been an incorrect assumption that they have a protected characteristic. This applies even if the person does not possess the characteristic.

**2.6 Third Party Harassment**

This is where an employee is harassed by a third party who is not an employee e.g. volunteers or service users. The organisation becomes liable if it has happened on at least two occasions, and is aware that it took place and have not taken steps to prevent it happening again.

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

1. **Policy Statement**

As an organisation, we value the variety of different views, outlooks and approaches that a diverse workforce bring. This assists us to provide improved services and increase our understanding of our service users/clients.

We will do all we can to ensure no one will receive less favourable treatment or is to be disadvantaged by requirements or conditions, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

1. **Responsibilities**

Employees and volunteers including Committee Members of Shama Women’s Centre have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed and to draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Whilst the organisation is potentially liable for any discriminatory acts carried out by its volunteers, staff or committee members, the individual who carries out the discriminatory act can also be personally liable.

**4.1 Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy by employees**

Breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

**4.2 Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy by volunteers (including Committee Members)**

*Your position as a volunteer may be jeopardised should you not follow this policy.’*

Whilst the organisation is potentially liable for any discriminatory acts carried out by its volunteers, staff or committee members, the individual who carries out the discriminatory act can also be personally liable.

Employees, volunteers and committee members are also personally liable under equality legislation for any act of unlawful discrimination.

**4.3 Raising Awareness of the Policy**

Responsibility for promoting awareness of this policy and monitoring that it is being followed rests with the Committee Members and Centre Managers.

1. **Equality and Diversity in Practice**

* Use of selection criteria that does not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and 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 his or her personal capability to carry out a given job/role
* 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 Equality and Diversity policy is reflected in other policies including recruitment, training, disciplinary and grievance that the Centre has in place.

1. **Implementation of the policy**

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

**6.1 Communications**

Communication of the Equality and Diversity policy to job applicants and employees/ volunteers will be undertaken by:

* Making available a copy of the policy to prospective applicants
* Ensuring all new starters have the opportunity to discuss the policy with line managers/ colleagues
* Making use of team meetings to discuss the policy and defining areas where practice could be improved
* Providing non- discrimination selection training for managers who are recruiting
* Providing Equality and Diversity training and guidance to staff and volunteers (including committee members)
* Including reference to abiding by the policy in staff terms and conditions/ volunteer agreements
* Incorporating specific responsibilities intojob/role descriptions
  1. **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, including monitoring the policy

**6.3 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 including community, faith venues.
* Considering accessibility of locations from which the service is provided, including disabled access.
* Considering the diverse make up of our staff/ volunteers in relation to our service users
* Considering the impact of proposed new services on the user group i.e. BME women.

1. **Monitoring of the Policy**

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.

* For employees and volunteers, diversity data will be collated and analysed in relation to recruitment, promotion, training and leavers.
* For learners it will include registration onto programmes, completion and attainment levels.
* For users it will include those accessing the different services the Centre provide, profile of members and will include the following types of information:
  + Information of location
  + Information on how they heard of our service/ accessed our service
  + Elements of the service used by protected characteristics

The above data will be analysed by Managers and made available for Committee Members. The data will be anonymised to comply with Data Protection legislation.

The information gathered will be considered in relation to e.g. baseline population statistics for the Highfields area and across the City of Leicester with high BME population, including service users from other similar organisations.

1. **Reporting discrimination / potential discrimination**

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

**8.1 Employees**

In the first instance the matter must be raised with the line manager, if the line manager is implicated the matter should be raised with the Chair of the Committee as per Shama Women’s Centre’s Grievance Procedure.

**8.2 Volunteers**

Volunteers who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise this with the line manager in the first instance as per Shama Women’s Centre’s Volunteer Policy.

**8.3 Service users**

Service users who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise it with the CEO in the first instance per Shama Women’s Centre’s Customer Complaints policy and procedure.

**8.4 Harassment**

Employees, volunteers and service users should also use this approach if they feel that they been the subject of harassment from someone who is not an employee of Shama Women’s. Shama Women’s Centre will not tolerate any harassment from third parties towards its employees, volunteers and service users and will take appropriate action to prevent it happening again.

If an employee, volunteer and service user 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 and sexual orientation, even if it is not directed at them they should also use this procedure.

*All complaints will be treated seriously, promptly and confidentiality.*

**9. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually 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 Reviewed: 2/11/22

Date of next review: 2/11/24

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