

# Dorset Reclaim Equality and Diversity Policy

## Introduction

Dorset Reclaim is committed to equality and diversity as a key feature within all our activities. We aim to provide a working environment and culture which recognises and values differences and encourages a diverse workforce and client group.

## Definition

Equality and diversity is about accepting and embracing people's differences and creating an environment in which people can thrive. Harnessing differences creates a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are met.

Equality is about treating people fairly and with respect, giving regard for others rights and wishes

Diversity is simply human qualities present in other individuals or groups that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, and can consist of visible and non-visible differences. It includes characteristics that are inborn and unchangeable, such as age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities/disabilities, race and sexual orientation and includes differences that are acquired and that can change throughout our lives. Examples include educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, religious beliefs, health and work experience.

## Our Principles

Our approach to equality and diversity is based on the following principles:-

- Fairness – we will work in a way that promotes equality and diversity and which does not discriminate against any of our staff, volunteers, clients and those with whom we work
- Respect – we will work with staff, volunteers and clients to encourage a culture where everyone receives respect and can voice their diverse needs, knowing that they will be listened to.
- Honesty – we will work to ensure that our practices are transparent and open to scrutiny.

- Providing opportunity – we will work towards a culture where all volunteers and staff have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Expertise and excellence – we will work to high standards to ensure that the diverse needs of our staff, volunteers, clients and partners are recognised and met.

## **Policy Statement**

We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in everything we do and we welcome the contribution that a diverse workforce and community can offer. To meet our aims we will ensure:-

- We are an organisation which is inclusive and values difference by seeking to ensure that our services are relevant and accessible.
- We attract, recruit, retain and develop talented people from all sections of the community to contribute at every level.
- We recognise that people from different backgrounds, cultures, skills and experiences can bring new ideas and perceptions that will help improve our services.
- We create an environment that upholds the right of everyone to be treated with respect and dignity, creating a fear free culture and allowing for personal development and growth.
- That no one involved with the work of Dorset Reclaim will receive less favourable treatment because of their age, gender, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, faith, family circumstances, disability, sexual orientation, political belief, social background or for any other reason.
- We embrace difference, listening to and meeting the changing needs of our clients, volunteers, staff partners, stakeholders and the community in which we work.
- We maintain an ongoing commitment to equality and diversity ensuring it is integrated into all our policies and practices.

## **Responsibility**

The Board of Dorset Reclaim has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, however all staff and volunteers have a duty as part of their involvement with us to do everything that they can to ensure the policy works in practice.

Dorset Reclaim's management team will bring to the attention of all staff, job applicants and volunteers the existence of this policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it. It is the responsibility of all who work

with us to ensure that no client, volunteer, or member of staff receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds referred to in this policy.

In addition, the management team will have responsibility for:-

- Providing a lead on issues covered in this policy
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding equality issues
- Taking appropriate action against anyone who discriminates
- Ensuring external partners are aware of the policy

All of our staff and volunteers will have responsibility for: -

- Creating and fostering an environment in which compliance with this policy is regarded an integral to their work
- Not victimising any person who has made a complaint or who has given information in connection with such a complaint
- Being pro-active in their approach to discrimination in the workplace and to respond to situations appropriately

We recognise that some clients and volunteers may, because of their past circumstances, present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with our policy. We will do what we can to challenge such behaviour and a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour whilst maintaining our support wherever possible.

In relation to our employees, breaches of our Equality and Diversity Policy will be treated seriously and regarded as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

## **Complaints**

If any client, volunteer or member of staff feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against in any way, such complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner. Any such complaint should be brought to the attention of the relevant Depot Manager or Project Manager.

Ray Tovey, the Project Manager is available for confidential consultation on any issues that concern a member of staff or volunteer relating to discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation. If preferred, a member of our Board, Lynne McCarty, is also available to speak to on these issues.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Project Manager will monitor all formal complaints and report such instances to the Board at six monthly intervals, together with a regular item being on the bi-monthly Management Team agendas.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the growing needs of the charity and the diverse culture in which we operate.

Signed by the  
Chairman: .....

Date: .....