

Appendix (7)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

General Statement of Intent

Dudley Council for Service recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. This policy seeks to value and harness these differences and to make our services relevant and approachable for everyone. We aim to draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences in order to meet the changing needs of our users, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters.

Dudley CVS believes in equality of opportunity and values all individuals regardless of any collective identity. However, we recognise that individual and institutional discriminatory practise has meant that some groups have not had equal access to services and fair employment practices, nor to opportunities in volunteering.

Dudley CVS believes that all people have a right to employment and to services which are free from direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of race, colour, caste, ethnic or national origin, religion, political affiliation, social class, employment or financial status, sex, disability (sensory impairment and learning disability), marital status, HIV/AIDS status, language (including the language of deaf people), gender identity, sexual orientation, age or non-relevant criminal conviction.

Dudley CVS is committed to providing an environment free of stereotyped and oppressive beliefs, attitudes and practices. We seek to promote diversify and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner. We work to reduce unfair discrimination in society and seek to eliminate such practices within the organisation.

A copy of this policy will be issued to each member of CVS staff.

Section A:

Responsibilities and arrangements for turning policy into practice:

A1: THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A1.1 The Board of Trustees as the employer has overall and final responsibilities in relation to the Race Relations Act (1976), Sex Discrimination Act (1975-85), Equal Pay Act (1970), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and all other relevant or subsequent legislation. The Board of Trustees will also ensure the development of a strategic commitment to diversify, which goes beyond adherence to any legal responsibilities.

A1.2 The Board of Trustees will review the effectiveness of this policy annually.

A2: CHIEF OFFICER

A2.1 The Chief Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is put into practice. In particular the Chief Officer will ensure that:

- employees receive sufficient information and training to enable them to translate this policy into organisational culture.
- line managers are aware of their responsibilities to their staff and volunteers in relation to equal opportunities and diversity.
- there are arrangements in place to properly monitor this policy.
- that managing diversity is internally driven, from a sense of commitment by the organisation and its employees wherever they are based.
- Those responsible for equality and diversity issues have the resources to carry out their work effectively.

A3: STAFFING/DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE

A3.1 The Staffing and Development Sub Committee will be required to undertake the following:

- to monitor the Dudley Council for Voluntary Service Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in relation to existing staff and the recruitment of new staff and volunteers.

- To ensure a comprehensive training programme is planned in order to make staff aware of their responsibilities and rights under this policy.
- To monitor and assess this policy in relation to all aspects of our service provision.
- Ensure that a commitment to the objectives of this policy is reflected at all levels through the organisation.

A4: All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will be expected to make this policy work and contribute to its on going development.

B: Recruitment and Selection

B1: REVIEWING VACANCIES

B1.1 As vacancies to paid posts and voluntary roles arise, all appointing officers must review the Job Description (and the Personal Specification) to ensure that it meets the requirements of this Policy.

B1.2 No arbitrary restrictions will be placed on vacancies. Where restrictions are applied they must be reasonably justifiable. All applicants should be made aware that general life experience and voluntary as well as paid work are valued.

B1.3 All job vacancies NJC Scale SO1 and below will be advertised internally in the first instance. An application process and timetable will be determined and internal applicants will be measured against the skills criteria on the person specification. Those meeting the baseline target score will be interviewed using the normal process described in section 3 below. If this proves unsuccessful the vacancy will be advertised externally in the normal manner described below.

B1.4 All jobs NJC Scale SO2 and above will be advertised externally using the process described below.

B1.5 Enhancement of Duties – Where additional duties are required in a team or project (e.g. line management or team leader) the position will be notified to all members of the particular team, or where appropriate across teams. An application / interview process will be followed as described in B1.3 above.

B1.6 New Posts – These will be advertised externally as described in **B2** below

B1.7 'Acting Up' – On occasion's vacant posts may be filled temporarily using 'acting up' arrangements. The 'acting up' role will be notified to all members of the particular team, or where appropriate across teams. An application / interview process will be followed as described in B1.3 above. The arrangements for the 'acting up' period will be clearly laid down in the notification and subsequent letter to the successful candidate.

B2: ADVERTISING

B2.1 Advertisements for job vacancies should be widely accessible and distributed through appropriate external media.

B2.2 Specifically advertisements should ensure:

- that there are no requirements or criteria which are unnecessary to the post and which might exclude applicants from any particular section of the community.
- That emphasis is placed on the availability of flexible working arrangements and/or job share opportunities where appropriate.
- No artificial age barriers are introduced.
- All advertisements state that Dudley CVS is working towards equal opportunities and values diversity.
- All advertisements state accessibility in relation to working environments.

B3: SHORT LISTING AND INTERVIEWING

B3.1 All applicants will be given equal consideration for appointments. Criteria for short listing must be clearly established by the preparation of Person Specifications and equally applied to all candidates. An appropriate job application form should be used and Dudley CVS should not accept personal CVs. The personal details section of the application form shall not be viewed by shortlisting panel until the process has been completed. Each individual should be assessed according to his/her personal capability to carry out a given job. General assumptions must not be made about individual applicants.

B3.2 Overseas qualifications, degrees and diplomas, which are comparable with UK qualifications, will be accepted as equivalents.

B3.3 When a job involves irregular or unsocial hours or travel, the full facts should be referred to in the Job Description or other recruitment literature.

B3.4 More than one person will carry out short listing and interviewing. Interview questions must not be of a discriminatory nature.

B3.5 Selection decisions must not be influenced by factors such as the traditional profile of the current post holder, unless for genuine occupational qualification reasons.

B3.6 The selection must not be influenced by the perceived prejudices of other staff.

B3.7 At both the short listing and appointment stage, brief notes shall be made on each application indicating clearly why the applicant has not been short listed or appointed. A form will be drafted for this purpose.

B3.8 Any recruitment records, which monitor the appropriate information to enable equal opportunity analysis must be kept for 12 months.

B4: AGE RESTRICTIONS

B4.1 In all recruitment and employment matters, age limits must not be applied in a way that is artificial or arbitrary. Age restrictions in employment at Dudley CVS are only applied where reasonably justified. Nothing in this policy can over-ride any statutory provisions (e.g. on minimum ages in employment matters). Where age restrictions are proposed, managers must be able to show reasonable justification for imposing such a limit.

Section C:

Career Development and the Provision of Training

C1: TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

C1.1 Relevant training opportunities will be published widely to all employees. Training will be available to trustees, paid staff and volunteers without discrimination and with regard to individual circumstances.

C2: CAREER BREAKS

C2.1 Consistent with the needs of the organisation, Dudley CVS will encourage initiatives designed to help staff who wish to return to work after a career break, or who wish to combine their pursuit of a career with raising a family.

C3: CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NEEDS

C3.1 Where employees have particular religious or cultural needs which may conflict with work requirements, managers will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met (e.g. where annual leave is sought on a religious festival it should not be unreasonably withheld).

C3.2 In dealing with such matters managers must seek to balance the operation needs of their department with the cultural and religious needs of employees. Where appropriate expert advice should be obtained.

C4: DISABLED EMPLOYEES

C4.1 The organisation will help employees who are disabled or become disabled to work within the organisation and wherever possible will assist with their rehabilitation and retraining. The aim is to maintain disabled staff in employment wherever practicable. Reasonable steps to achieve this may involve adjusting working conditions and practices as well as redeployment to alternative work.

C5: INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT/COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

C5.1 All workers should have access to support. If for example, a group of workers sharing a collective identity wish to set up a support group then this should be encouraged. If a worker feels isolated then provision should be made for external support.

C6: COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

C6.1 Each member of staff should respect other members of staff and realise that behaviour that they may find acceptable may not be so regarded by others.

C6.2 Harassment at work in any form is entirely unacceptable and each member of staff carries responsibility for their own behaviour under the policy.

C6.3 The policy aims to prevent all forms of offensive behaviour but where there is a breach of this policy the person(s) responsible will be liable for disciplinary action. Some harassing behaviour may also be unlawful.

C6.4 Harassment can take many forms and may be directed in particular against minority groups or individuals (e.g. because of a person physical appearance or other characteristic).

C6.5 It may involve action, behaviour, comment or physical contact, which is found objectionable or which causes offence, it can result in the recipient feeling threatened, humiliated or patronised and it can create an intimidating work environment as well as interfere with the employee's job performance and undermine their job security.

C6.6 Dudley CVS will provide support for employees who allege harassment and a proper investigation of complaints will take place.

C6.7 Fair procedures will be followed and instigated promptly to minimise potential stress both for the alleged harasser AND THE COMPLAINANT.

C6.8 Managers shall act and react with dignity and respect towards employees and they shall ensure that all those involved work in a similar in their relationships with each other.

C7: INFORMAL PROCEDURE

C7.1 Wherever possible employees who believe that they have been the subject of harassment, should tell the person responsible that they find their behaviour offensive and ask them to desist. If the individuals feel unable to do this themselves they may ask another colleague or their Line Manager to do it for them.

C7.2 If the alleged harassment continues, or the complainant feels unable to speak directly to the alleged harasser, it may be helpful to write to the person concerned clearly indicating what is considered to be unacceptable behaviour.

C8: FORMAL PROCEDURE

C8.1 If the behaviour continues (or the informal procedure seems inappropriate) the matter should be reported in writing to the complainant's manager giving details of the incidents, when they occurred, any possible witnesses and any discussion or correspondence under the informal procedure. After receipt, the

matter shall be brought to the attention of the alleged harasser's Manager (if this is not also the complainant's Manager) who shall carry out an investigation.

C8.2 As an alternative to the above, which may be inappropriate, (e.g. because the alleged harasser is the complainant's Manager), the complainant may raise the matter with the Chief Officer or any member of the Staff and Development Sub Committee.

C8.3 The investigation shall be carried out under the terms of Dudley CVS Disciplinary Procedures. During the investigation or resultant Disciplinary Hearing the complainant and alleged harasser will have the right to be represented.

C8.4 Any action resulting from the investigation will be in line with normal Dudley CVS Disciplinary Procedures.

C9: VICTIMISATION

C9.1 Employees will not be victimised in any way for complaining about discrimination or harassment and for giving evidence about such a complaint.

Section D:

Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Service Delivery

D1: CONSULTATION

D1.1 Dudley CVS aims to actively encourage the views of groups, which experience discrimination in order to improve our service delivery. This should cover all aspects of our service including: management practice, recruitment, employment, volunteer involvement, training and development, publicity/publications and access to resources.

D2: ACCESS TO MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES

D2.1 Dudley CVS will aim to ensure that its membership, goods and services are accessible to all and reflect the needs of the various communities of people who may need them with particular reference to the needs of under-represented groups.

D2.2 Dudley CVS will aim to make its buildings and meeting venues accessible to people with disabilities (including sensory impairment and learning difficulties).

D2.3 Dudley CVS will make every effort to take account of the needs of people and groups on low income using our services.

D2.4 Dudley CVS aims to ensure that all people will receive a positive and sustained welcome from their first point of contact with the organisation and staff will monitor consumer feedback to develop a better service in relation to diversify.

D2.5 Dudley CVS will ensure that an accessible complaints procedure is available to ensure against discrimination in service allocation and delivery.

D3: MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

D3.1 In order to promote equality of access to our service, Dudley CVS will ensure that the organisation's services are well publicised. Publicity will include statements about our commitment to diversity and equal opportunities.

D3.2 The marketing of Dudley CVS will strive to provide information and resource materials which are written free from jargon, as well as from racist, ageist, disabling, homophobic, sexist images, language or attitudes and any other discriminatory practices.

D4: COMMUNICATION

D4.1 Dudley CVS aims to create a climate of communication, which reflects the needs of different linguistic and cultural groups by providing interpreters and signers as appropriate. Information will be provided in a variety of formats (e.g. audio tape or large print) on request.