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**EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

**FEBRUARY 2022**

**COMPANY POLICY**

# Equality & Diversity Policy

## Aims of the Policy

CTC Psychological Services LLP [CTC] is committed to creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all are respected and valued. We will do all we can to ensure that we recruit, train and promote people based on qualifications, experience and abilities for all roles within the service. We will assist and encourage all members of our service to use their talents to reach their full potential. We aim to be supportive, fair, just and free from discrimination.

This policy is to ensure that our service complies with its obligations under equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and best practice guidelines. It demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly. We are 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).

We will do all we can to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions that cannot be shown to be justifiable, and we will ensure that the legislation and policy requirements within the nine Protected Characteristics of equality and diversity are implemented into our working practices.

Using fair and objective employment practices, we aim to ensure the following:

- 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, whether it be from other employees or from people who are not employees of our service, such as customers or clients;
- All employees, volunteers or 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 resulting from their associating with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic or because others perceive that they have a particular Protected Characteristic, even if they do not.

## Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to job applicants, all staff within our service (whether working full-time or part-time, or whether contracted to or on placement with our service, on a short, medium or long-term basis, including volunteers), service users, professional associates and those who provide goods or services to our service.

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

## Definitions of Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 defines seven main forms of discrimination in association with Protected Characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership,

pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

They are detailed below:

- **Direct Discrimination:** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than someone else due to a Protected Characteristic. People also must not be discriminated against because they are on a part-time or fixed term contract;
- **Associative Discrimination:** this occurs when someone is treated less favourably than someone else because they are associated with someone with a Protected Characteristic;
- **Perceptive Discrimination:** this occurs when someone is treated less favourably than someone else because there has been an incorrect assumption that they have a Protected Characteristic. It applies even if the person does not possess that characteristic;
- **Indirect Discrimination:** this occurs when a working condition, practice or rule that applies to everyone places a group of people who share a Protected Characteristic at a disadvantage (ie it is more difficult for people from one group to comply with the requirement). Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim;
- **Harassment:** this is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. It relates to behaviour that employees find offensive, even if it is not directed at them, irrespective of whether or not they possess the relevant characteristic themselves;
- **Third Party Harassment:** this occurs when an employee is harassed by a third party who is not an employee, eg volunteers or service users. An employer is legally responsible if they know an employee has been harassed on two or more occasions and reasonable steps have not been taken to protect the employee from further harassment;
- **Victimisation:** this occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination, or have raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so.

## Responsibilities

All members of our service have a duty to act within this policy, to ensure it is followed, and to avoid any action that goes against the spirit of this policy. More specifically, all members of our service have a responsibility to:

- Ensure their behaviour is appropriate to this policy and that they treat people with dignity and respect;
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity;
- Not victimise anyone as a result of their having complained about, reported or provided evidence of discrimination;
- Not harass, abuse or intimidate others.

CTC Managing Partner, Julian Long, is responsible for promoting awareness of our Equality and Diversity Policy, monitoring that it is being followed, and addressing breaches of the policy. Breaches will be regarded as misconduct, and may result in disciplinary proceedings for employees or jeopardise a volunteer or trainee's position within our service.

Whilst we acknowledge the responsibilities of our service in relation to discriminatory acts by our employees and volunteers, employees and volunteers are also personally liable under legislation for any act of unlawful discrimination.

## Equality & Diversity in Practice

In carrying out this policy, our service is committed to the following:

- Use of selection criteria that does not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and promotion procedures;
- Entry to employment, volunteering or progression within our service will be based on merit;
- We will not discriminate in opportunities for recruitment, training or promotion;
- Every individual will be assessed according to his or her personal capability to carry out a given job/role;
- All employees will be 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;
- We will ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the operation of grievance and disciplinary procedures;
- All relevant requirements of the Equality Act in relation to Disability will be met and adhered to, including making reasonable adjustments to ensure access to employment or volunteering tasks and opportunities;
- Any amendments to legislation relating to discrimination will be met and adhered to.

## Implementation of the Policy

All members of our service have individual and collective responsibility to value and respect each other's contributions, creating a supportive, safe and harassment-free environment in which diversity is valued.

All employees and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this policy, and will be afforded the opportunity to discuss the policy with their colleagues/manager.

We value contributions from every member of our team with regard to discussing and defining areas where practice could be improved and will provide continuing training as necessary.

We are also committed to working with agencies who share our values with regard to equality and diversity.

## Reporting Discrimination/Potential Discrimination

Concerns raised by service users, professional associates or other third parties should be reported to Managing Partner Julian Long, and this will be addressed in accordance with our Complaints Procedure.

Employees or volunteers who observe discriminatory behaviour or feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should bring this to the attention of the Managing Partner.

All complaints will be treated seriously, promptly and confidentially.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains up to date and reflects the needs and practices of our service. It may also be reviewed in the interim if legislation changes or if there is any indication that practices should be altered.

**Last Reviewed :** February 2022

**Next Review :** February 2023

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