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**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY**

**& INCLUSION POLICY**

**PURPOSE**

South West Ross Community Car Scheme (SWRCCS) is an equal opportunity employer.

SWRCCS is committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

The personal commitment of every employee, trustee and volunteer to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout SWRCCS.

SWRCCS is committed to being a successful, caring and welcoming place for all employees, volunteers, users and trustees. We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where our employees, volunteers, users and trustees can reach their full potential, without prejudice and discrimination. We are committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered, and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our Organisation as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and trustees, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect.

Through this policy and procedure and the training and development of managers and staff, SWRCCS will do all it can to promote good practice in this area in order to eliminate discrimination and harassment as far as is reasonably possible. SWRCCS will also continue to work towards its dedicated goal of encouraging and promoting equality and diversity within the workforce.

**AIM**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant, member of staff, volunteer, trustee or user receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The policy aims to achieve equality by removing any potential discrimination in the way that anyone is treated by others involved in SWRCCS or SWRCCS itself, including:

* people with disabilities
* people of different sexual orientations
* transgendered and transsexual people
* people of different races
* people on the grounds of their sex
* those of faith and of no faith
* in relation to their age
* in relation to their social class or medical condition
* people who work part-time
* those who are married or in a civil partnership
* women who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect discrimination. Some of the above are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and discrimination is prohibited unless there is a legal exception under the Equality Act.

**Direct discrimination**

This is where someone is treated less favourably due to one (or more) protected characteristics. It can be intentional or unintentional discrimination. Occasionally the discrimination may occur due to a protected characteristic of another person, so the discrimination may be because of association. An example is an advert for a job that requires ‘men only’ or ‘under 30s only’.

**Indirect discrimination**

This is where someone is disadvantaged by an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice (PCP) that is applied ‘across the board’ or ‘equally across a particular group’. The PCP may have the consequence (usually unintended) of causing a disadvantage, which then actually affects somebody. For example, a PCP relating to clothing or headwear could be applied ‘equally’ but may cause someone with a protected characteristic to be disadvantaged. The PCP could be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Victimisation**

This is not the same as the common meaning of victimisation but is specifically regarding treating someone less favourably because they have complained about or given information about discrimination or harassment, either regarding themselves or someone else.

**Harassment**

This is part of the Equality Act but is covered in more detail in the Safeguarding policy.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to how employees treat fellow employees, visitors, suppliers and former employees. The Act also applies to trustees, users and volunteers.

**EFFECT ON VOLUNTEERS**

SWRCCS is committed to:

* creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our volunteers are recognised and valued
* entitling every volunteer to an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
* providing training, development and progression opportunities to all volunteers
* having clear procedures that enable our volunteers to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly (Raising a Concern procedures set out).
* encouraging all volunteers to come forward with any issues they need organisation assistance and understanding with, no matter their background, identity or circumstances

All volunteers are required to sign and acknowledge the Code of Conduct which states their commitment to treat others fairly.

**EFFECT ON USERS**

SWRCCS is committed to:

* providing services to which all users are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class
* making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our service users by assessing and meeting their needs
* having clear procedures that enable our users to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated (Raising a Concern procedures set out)

All users are expected to treat volunteers fairly and without discrimination.

**EFFECT ON STAFF**

SWRCCS is committed to:

* creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff and volunteers are recognised and valued
* entitling every employee, worker or self-employed contractor to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
* providing training, development and progression opportunities to all staff
* having clear procedures that enable our candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated (Raising a Concern procedures set out)
* encouraging all staff to come forward with any issues they need organisation assistance and understanding with, no matter their background, identity or circumstances

All staff are required to sign and acknowledge the Code of Conduct which states their commitment to treat others fairly.

When holding events, introducing new policies or procedures, staff are expected to assess if an Equality Impact Assessment is need and if so, to carry one out to ensure that the event, policy or procedure does not have a negative effect on any aspect of this Policy.

**EFFECT ON TRUSTEES**

SWRCCS board of trustees is committed to:

* fully supporting this policy and ensuring agreement has been reached with employee representatives, as appropriate
* selecting those for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit purely on the basis of aptitude and ability
* monitoring and reviewing this policy annually
* treating breaches of our equality and diversity policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings (as laid out in Disciplinary Policy and Raising a Concern procedures)
* understanding equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sense
* regularly reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

In particular, SWRCCS board of trustees will implement the following during recruitment process:

* Omitting all personal questions from job interviews
* Maintaining a diverse panel to make decisions
* Referring to specific job criteria when making recruitment decisions
* Discounting any favourable personal relationships with staff or volunteers.
* Making decisions collectively between board members
* Monitor the diversity of staff, trustees and candidates using the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

All trustees are required to sign and acknowledge the Code of Conduct which states their commitment to treat others fairly.

If trustees feel that they have been discriminated against then they are encouraged and supported to Raise a Concern following the procedures outlined.

**OTHER DOCUMENTS REFERENCED**

Code of conduct

Safeguarding Policy and procedure

Raising a Concern procedures

Disciplinary Policy

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Equalities Impact Assessment

Available at <https://www.swrc-carscheme.co.uk/privacy>

Other useful information

[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

Document version control

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