

Equality and Diversity Policy

BCVS is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive culture for:

- all those who need our services
- our volunteers
- our staff and
- other stakeholders

We recognise the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and fairness, and challenging discrimination. We welcome our legal duties not to discriminate as a service provider and an employer. We aim to go beyond the narrow scope of legislative compliance and follow best practice, making equality, fairness and diversity a fundamental part of all our activities.

We recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and we wish to encourage and harness these differences to make our services more relevant and approachable.

We will not discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics". We will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour on these grounds.

1. Purpose of Policy

This policy relates to all aspects of work undertaken by BCVS including employment and recruitment and selection, meeting customers' needs and service delivery, dealing with volunteers, suppliers, supporters and other associated third parties.

2. Meeting customers' needs

We are committed to treating all service users equally and fairly, and to not discriminating unlawfully against them. We will also, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity. We will ensure that service users:

- are able to access the service in ways that suit them
- are given support that is relevant to their situation
- are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination
- have their needs listened to, and met whenever possible

BCVS is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our service users. We will take steps to identify the needs in our community and develop policies and procedures accordingly. We aim to ensure that the services we provide are accessible to all. We will take into account, in particular, the needs of service users with a disability (including mental health problems) and who are unable to communicate effectively in English, including those who are deaf, who use BSL and who are hard of hearing. We will consider whether particular groups are predominant within our customer base and devise appropriate policies/procedures to meet their needs. Such groups include: men and women; carers; older people; members of religious groups; ethnic groups or nationalities and lesbian, gay or transgender people – this list is not exhaustive.



Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service

5. Employment (paid staff)

5.1 General statement

As an employer, BCVS will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotions and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, selections for redundancy, references and any other employment related activities.

5.2 Recruitment and selection

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- we endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable
- employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit
- where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applicants from all sections of society and especially from those underrepresented in the workforce
- selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate
- where appropriate and necessary lawful exemption (genuine occupation requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups
- any third parties acting for BCVS in respect of employment are made aware of the requirements not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

5.3 Training and development

We will ensure that all employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Selection for all training and career development opportunities will be on the basis of organisational need, legal requirements of the organisation and at the discretion of our line manager. Appraisals of performance will be conducted objectively and on time.

5.4 Meeting individual needs

BCVS will do its utmost to meet the needs of individuals at work, for example:

- Recognising caring and domestic responsibilities
- Working patterns - wherever possible, training courses and meetings will be planned to allow attendance by staff working non-standard hours/working patterns
- Disability – reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to remove barriers and enable disabled staff to carry out their roles
- Religious practices – time off and suitable facilities for prayer will be provided wherever possible. Requests for annual leave to celebrate religious festivals will be accommodated wherever possible

6. Volunteers

Volunteers contribute significantly to the diversity of the organisation. They can expect to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination. They are likewise expected to treat others fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination.

Volunteers by status, are not entitled to the same rights and protection as employees.



Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service

7. Implementing the policy

The BCVS Chief Executive Officer is responsible for implementing this equality and diversity policy within BCVS.

7.1 Responsibilities

All staff, managers, volunteers and trustees will be given a copy of an equality and diversity policy as part of their induction.

7.2 All staff

At all levels of the organisation staff are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and to immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.

7.3 All managers

Managers are responsible for promoting this policy and ensuring it is understood and complied with by all staff in their area, dealing with breaches and complaints (whether reported or not) seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially and contributing ideas for the advancement of diversity principles within the organisation. Managers are expected to be proactive in identifying circumstances in which elements of the policy can benefit individual members of staff, and encourage and support staff in making use of such benefits.

7.4 Conduct and general standards of behaviour:

All staff are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. BCVS will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- making threats
- physical violence
- shouting
- swearing at others
- persistent rudeness
- isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- telling offensive jokes or name calling
- displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist/racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email/text message or any other format
- any other forms of harassment or victimization

The items on the above list of unacceptable behaviours are considered to be disciplinary offences within BCVS and can lead to disciplinary action being taken. This is not an exhaustive list. Such acts may, in certain circumstances, constitute gross misconduct and could lead to your summary dismissal.

BCVS does, however, encourage staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defense to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

7.5 Complaints of discrimination

BCVS will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, volunteers, clients or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.



Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures. We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by staff, volunteers, customers and other third parties.

8. Monitoring

BCVS will monitor and record equal opportunities information about staff and volunteers, including trustees, on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

We will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and will have no bearing on opportunities or benefits. Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring will be used only for this purpose. The data will be dealt with in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations, where it cannot be anonymised or where there is a risk that the information can be identified to a particular person.

We will monitor this policy periodically to judge its effectiveness and it will be updated in accordance with relevant changes in the law.

In particular, we will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promoted posts), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups. We will review our equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, we will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and you for monitoring will be used only for this purpose. The data will be dealt with in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations, where it cannot be anonymized or where there is a risk that the information can be identified to a particular person.

9. Redress

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against or been the victim of a breach of this policy, you may use our grievance procedure to make a complaint.

If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, you should refer to the 'Dignity at Work Policy.'

We will take all complaints seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance which we uphold.

You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.



Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed yearly, or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance, problems or in light of emerging legislation or best practice that could impact on this policy.

A report of the findings of the review, based on the data and other information collected and evaluated, will be presented to the trustee board annually and appropriate action taken.

Date: March 2023



Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service

Appendix 1 – Equal Opportunities in Employment Summary

It is essential that you behave at all times in accordance with the requirements of BCVS's equal opportunities policies. The following is a summary of BCVS's aims on equal opportunities.

- As an equal opportunity employer, BCVS has a commitment to equal opportunities including the recruitment, training and promotion of employees;

It opposes all forms of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

- It requires all members of staff to adhere to the organisations' equal opportunities policy;
- Where appropriate, employees will be given special training to ensure that equal opportunities are achieved within the organisation;
- Where appropriate, breaches of BCVS's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with under the Dignity at Work policy or Grievance procedure [or equivalent];
- The terms and conditions of employment will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that equal opportunities requirements are complied with.