
Equality and Diversity Policy

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PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

1. Statement of Intent

- ChangeKitchen CIC is committed to providing equality of opportunity and to ensuring that all employees, job applicants, customers/clients and other people with whom we deal are treated fairly and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination. Our policy is designed to ensure that current and potential workers are offered the same opportunities regardless of gender, sex, race, ethnicity, nationality or colour, political / philosophical or religious beliefs, previous offending history, trade union activity, disability, mental health, HIV status, age, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. We seek to ensure that no one suffers, either directly or indirectly, as a result of unlawful discrimination. This extends beyond the individual's own characteristics, to cover discrimination by association and by perception.
- We recognise that an effective equality policy will help all employees to develop to their full potential, which is clearly in the best interests of both employees and our business. We aim to ensure that we not only observe the relevant legislation but also do whatever is necessary to provide genuine equality of opportunity.
- We expect everyone who works for us to be treated and to treat others with respect. Our aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form that may affect the dignity of the individual.
- We further recognise the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds, as this creates a workforce where creativity and valuing difference in others thrives. We value the wealth of experience within the community in which we operate and aspire to have a workforce that reflects this.
- This policy is not contractual, but aims to set out the way in which ChangeKitchen CIC aims to manage equal opportunity. This policy applies to all employees and workers. ChangeKitchen is committed to fighting discrimination in all areas of its work and this policy is part of that commitment.

2. Responsibility

Line Managers will be responsible for the implementation of this policy within their departments. The Board of Directors will nominate a member of the management team to take responsibility for its implementation.

It is a condition of employment that all volunteers, staff and board members adhere to this policy. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary measures being taken according to our procedures.

3. The legal framework

The main legislation that covers equal opportunity and discrimination is the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the following should be taken into consideration:

- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- the Protection from Harassment Act 1997

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- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- any Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission
- plus any amendments to the above legislation.

Wherever possible the organisation's commitment to equality goes beyond those groups protected by law.

4. Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect, and can take different forms, for example:

- treating any individual less favourably than others on grounds of a protected characteristic (gender, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marital status or civil partnership, or pregnancy/maternity)
- expecting a person, solely on the grounds stated above, to comply with requirements that are different to the requirements for others, for any reason whatsoever
- imposing on an individual requirements that are in effect more onerous than they are on others. This would include applying a condition (which is not warranted by the requirements of the position) which makes it more difficult for members of a particular group to comply than others not of that group
- harassment i.e. unwanted conduct which has "the purpose, intentionally or unintentionally, of violating dignity, or which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment" for the individual
- victimisation – i.e. treating a person less favourably because he or she has committed a "protected act". "Protected acts" include previous legal proceedings brought against the employer or the perpetrator, or the giving of evidence at a disciplinary or grievance hearing or at tribunal, or making complaints about the perpetrator or the employer or their alleged discriminatory practices.
- discrimination by association, i.e. someone is discriminated against because he/she associates with someone who possesses a protected characteristic
- discrimination by perception, i.e. discrimination on the grounds that the person is perceived as belonging to a particular group, e.g. sexual orientation, religion or belief, irrespective of whether or not this is correct
- any other act or omission of an act, which has the effect of disadvantaging one person against another, purely on the above grounds.

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PART TWO - GUIDELINES

1. Recruitment and selection

- Decisions on job appointments, promotions and transfers will be on the basis of merit and ability and will be made without reference to any of the protected characteristics
- All job adverts will include the Organisation Equal Opportunities statement, the Disability Employers Symbol and actively encourage applications from underrepresented groups, if any.
- Before any job is advertised an employee specification must be drawn up. This should outline the essential qualifications and attributes necessary for the job. It should be checked for direct or indirect discrimination, including unnecessary qualifications, age and experience barriers, or culture-bound assumptions. Applicants should be made aware that general life experience and voluntary as well as paid work are valued.
- In principle all jobs must be advertised externally and as widely as possible, in addition to whatever networks the team concerned may choose to utilise. Management will keep the methods used under review. Adverts should clearly state the minimum requirements for the post. In addition to the Equal Opportunities statement, advertisements should clearly state that the project positively welcomes applications from candidates from minority groups and women.
- Where management feels that there are strong grounds for an existing member of staff to be appointed to a post without recourse to external advertising, the matter will be referred to the Management Committee which will formally consider whether the grounds claimed justify an exception to the policy of external advertising.
- When short-listing takes place, brief notes should be made on each application, indicating why the person was or was not short-listed. A standard form should be designed for this purpose.
- No interview for any post, whether full or part time and at whatever level, should be carried out by only one person. All interview panels must seek to include women and black / minority ethnic people. When people with a disability apply, attempts shall also be made to include people with a specialised knowledge of disability on the panels for both short listing and interviews.
- Reasonable adjustments should be made to the arrangements for interview/selection so as not to disadvantage candidates, where the company/charity is aware of an employee/applicant with a disability:
- During each interview, notes should be taken and at the end of the interview a form should be completed for each candidate, assessing their response to the topics and themes raised. These should be reviewed at the end of the interview process by the panel to see that each candidate has been treated fairly.
- Questions on the following topics should never be asked in an interview. Any candidate who is asked these questions has the right to refuse to answer. It is the responsibility of the Chair, or any other member of the panel, to stop such questions being asked.
 - Marital status
 - Sexuality
 - Occupation of partner
 - Number of children
 - Age
 - Domestic arrangements (it should be made clear that the organisation aims to be flexible in adjusting to individual requirements)
 - Religious or political beliefs
 - Trade union activities

A past history of illness, either physical or mental, will be treated sympathetically.

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- The company/charity will discuss the implications of any disability with the employee or the applicant concerned, and will consider any reasonable adjustment(s) to the working environment or working arrangements prior to final decision on the appointment, promotion or transfer.
- An assessment of an individual's suitability for a particular job shall take account of relevant qualifications and experience obtained by the candidate both inside and outside of the UK:
- An equal opportunity monitoring section will be included with the application on a separate sheet. The Equal Opportunities Policy and the purpose of monitoring should be clearly explained. The form should ask candidates to identify themselves, if they wish, by gender and racial origin. It should also ask them, if they wish, to note any disability. An analysis of this information should regularly be reviewed. Monitoring should take place at every stage of the process.

2. Training and promotion

ChangeKitchen recognises that equal opportunity responsibilities do not end at selection, and is committed to ensure that wherever possible all employees receive the widest possible range of development opportunities for advancement.

All employees will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their manager. Opportunities for promotion and training will be communicated and made available to everyone on a fair and equal basis.

The provision of training will be reviewed to ensure that provisions are made where necessary to enable part-time workers, shift or remote workers or those returning to work following a break to benefit from training. No age limits apply for entry to training or development schemes which are open to all employees.

3. Physical access and work arrangements

Access to the Organisation's premises will be reviewed annually and improved so that the employment of individuals with disabilities can be a realistic possibility. Similarly, a positive attempt will be made to provide necessary facilities for anyone who requires special work arrangements as a result of a disability.

4. Disciplinary and grievance procedures

It will be made clear to all staff that discrimination, abuse or harassment on the grounds of a protected characteristic or for any of the reasons outlined in this policy is a dismissible offence.

Employees who believe they have been discriminated against and have not been able to resolve this informally are advised to use our internal grievance procedure. An employee who brings a complaint of discrimination will not be less favourably treated.

Harassment or bullying will not be tolerated, and any individual who feels that he/she has been subjected to harassment or bullying should refer to our bullying and harassment policy. Equally, anyone who witnesses incidents of harassment or bullying should report this to his/her manager or an appropriate senior member of staff.

When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that employees or workers who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other employees or workers.

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5. Terms and conditions of employment

The Conditions of Service should be checked every two years to make sure that they do not indirectly discriminate and that they adequately provide for the needs of ChangeKitchen staff, volunteers and board members.

It is a condition of employment that all volunteers, staff and board members adhere to this policy. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary measures being taken.

6. Communication of this policy

All new members of staff shall, as part of their induction, be given a copy of the ChangeKitchen's Equality Policy and be informed of all relevant procedures.

All job applicants will also be made aware of this policy. Customers/clients may also be advised of this policy.

In addition, employees will be reminded of the policy through such means as advertisements, application forms, posters, training courses and emails.

7. Review

The implementation of this policy will be reviewed every two years by the Board of Directors to see what changes have resulted, and analyse in detail failures and successes with the aim of moving towards ensuring equality of access to employment at the Organisation and equality of treatment once employed.

Name: Thomas Randa

Signature: Thomas Randa

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