**Equality and Diversity Policy for Hearing Loss Cornwall**

Hearing Loss Cornwall Equality and Diversity Policy outlines the organisation’s commitment to equal opportunities, in relation to the employment of staff and volunteers and the provision of services for d/Deaf people.

**We work to ensure that Equality and Diversity is embedded in our organisation according to the protected characteristics of:**

Sex, race, religion, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership

**and:**

* Promote equal opportunity
* Promote good relations
* Eliminate discrimination (either direct or indirect)

**The principles are:**

To ensure that we work in a non-discriminatory environment and model good practice.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our staff will not discriminate directly, or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Company’s goods and services.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

**OUR COMMITMENT**

To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.

To promote equality in the workplace, which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees.

The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

**RESPONSIBILITES OF MANAGEMENT**Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Executive Officer who will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination.   
  
The Executive Officer will ensure that:

* all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
* grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
* proper records are maintained.

The Board of Trustees will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

Responsibility for ensuring that there are no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

* comply with the policy and arrangements;
* not discriminate in their day- to- day activities or induce others to do so;
* not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
* ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
* inform the Executive Officer if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

**THIRD PARTIES**

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Hearing Loss Cornwall will not tolerate such actions against it’s staff, and the employee concerned should inform the Executive Officer, at once, that this has occurred.

Hearing Loss Cornwall will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

**RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS**

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. Hearing Loss Cornwall policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

**RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE**

Hearing Loss Cornwall attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people. Under the terms of this policy, the charity is required to:

* make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: trustees are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
* include disabled people in training/development programmes;
* give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

**Recruit and employ people fairly**

Hearing Loss Cornwall will aim to ensure that we provide equality of opportunity to all in our employment

* Use non-discriminatory job criteria
* Apply fair selection practice
* Aim to make reasonable adjustments

**EQUALITY TRAINING**

A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in the staff induction process.

Training will be provided for the Executive Officer on this policy and the associated arrangements. All those who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

**MONITORING**

Make sure information is accessible in plain English and provide alternative formats, where possible. This may include using the services of communication support workers

Make sure that our team is accessible and welcoming

The Charity deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation. Accordingly, the Executive Officer will be required to monitor the effectiveness of any policy arrangements.

While the charity employs a small number of people, it may be required, in the future to develop a routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.

The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

**GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE**Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Charity’s Grievance or Harassment Procedures.Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Charity’s Disciplinary Procedure.

We will:

* Handle complaints and grievances properly and rigourously
* Resolve matters positively
* Respond to incidents of prejudice/hate crime
* Provide access to services, facilities and information

Staff or volunteers who behave contrary to the principle set out in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action

**REVIEW**

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually by Executive Officer.

**Reviewed January 2023**