

greenbank

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Greenbank Project (referred to as Greenbank) strives for high standards both as an employer and as a provider of services. In so doing, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.

This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for Greenbank to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address issues raised under Greenbank's comments, compliments and complaints policy.

Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action.

Greenbank's aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. Greenbank is committed to reviewing this policy on a bi-annual basis. Through our training, publications and communications with management, staff, volunteers and service users Greenbank will ensure those we work with know our statements of policy.

Greenbank will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and procedures. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

All partnerships/agreements i.e. customers, suppliers, consultants, training and placement providers etc will need to strive to support Greenbank's pro-active approach to achieving Equality and Diversity.

2. DEFINITIONS

Equal Opportunities ensure that policies, procedures and practice within Greenbank do not discriminate against the people within it. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of whom they are, their background or their lifestyle.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to Greenbank. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more enjoyable, creative, efficient and innovative.

Direct Discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or gender. For example, marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; disability, physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition, which although it applies equally to persons of all groups, is such that only a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it. **Examples:** a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified; requiring applicants to have British qualifications.

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted rights under the Gender Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act or the Disability Discrimination Act or acted as a whistleblower on such activity. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

Harassment means repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an employee or service users or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual. (See Greenbank's Grievance Policy for guidance where harassment has occurred).

Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees or service users who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that are comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures would normally take the form of additional training. **'Positive discrimination'** at the point of selection for work is not permissible. Greenbank urges trustees, staff, volunteers and service users to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals.

3. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Diversity

Greenbank will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and Greenbank.

Greenbank encourages all people it works with and for to contribute to an environment in which people are comfortable expressing what they think and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

The way we work, train and learn within Greenbank reflects both the Mission and Objectives of Greenbank and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

Greenbank will consider making reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees, staff, volunteers and service users to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in Greenbank's work.

Greenbank will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

Equal Opportunities:

Greenbank is an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No job applicant, trustee, member of staff, volunteer and service user should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; gender; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; disability, physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; long term health condition; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities. Nor will such person be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This principle applies to recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, training, benefits, facilities, service provision, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment.

* Please note that Greenbank practices positive action towards the employment of disabled people. All applicants that declare a disability and meet the minimum standards as detailed in the person specification are guaranteed an interview.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- To ensure equal access to employment and service provision
- To ensure compliance with current legislation on discrimination and equality
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers and service users
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to Greenbank's work
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in Greenbank and to ensure acceptance and compliance with this policy as part of Greenbank's induction process
 - To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all Greenbank's premises and services are accessible to all people
 - To ensure that employment and promotion within the organisation is determined by objective criteria and personal merit

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: EXPECTATIONS

Greenbank recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and Greenbank will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities.

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Trustees. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to the Chief Executive of Greenbank. However, Greenbank believes that all trustees, staff, volunteers and service users have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality. Therefore:

Greenbank expects individuals:-

- to co-operate with measures introduced by Greenbank to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and non discrimination
- not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other employee or participant on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; gender; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; disability, physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities
- to feel sufficiently confident to inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place

Greenbank expects our Line Managers:-

- to ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained and regular reviews of employment practices are carried out
- to ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with Greenbank's Grievance Policy and Procedure
- to ensure that individuals within their area are aware of their legal responsibilities, and the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy
- to promote actively the benefits of employee and participant diversity, in employment, services and training

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

Greenbank strives to ensure that our trustees, staff, volunteers and service users reflect the wider community.

Clear and accurate information on vacant posts should be available through advertisement, job descriptions, person specifications and interview. Vacancies should be advertised sufficiently widely to reach the widest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external (subject to budgetary constraints).

All recruitment material should not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a post to a particular group.

Applicants will be informed, through all recruitment material of Greenbank's commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity and the existence of this policy.

Person specifications may include 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements that are necessary and justifiable. Care, and advice where necessary, is needed to ensure these are not discriminatory.

Greenbank aims to recruit and retain quality staff and believes that staff and volunteers should be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals.

Job titles that are discriminatory should be avoided.

Greenbank will endeavour to accommodate flexible working practices that suit the needs of staff and volunteers whilst maintaining organisational needs.

Greenbank will apply positive action to meet the needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: INTERVIEWS AND SELECTION

In line with the intentions of this policy, interviewing and selection policies and processes must take care to reflect the gender, disability and ethnic make up of Greenbank when selecting the panel.

The short listing panel will not select candidates on the basis of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, religion or other unjustifiable factors of the candidate. Greenbank will apply positive action to meet the needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups and all applicants that declare a disability and meet the minimum standards as detailed in the person specification are guaranteed an interview.

The interview panel will ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on grounds that cannot be shown to be justifiable. Steps will be taken to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment because of her or his:

sex and marital status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation and gender; race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality; disability; religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation; other unjustifiable factors, for example, age or language difficulties.

Relevant training on the interview and selection process will be provided for staff and volunteers needing it.

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: TRAINING

In line with the intentions of this policy, Greenbank will not discriminate in the provision of relevant training courses/opportunities wherever possible.

Relevant training will be provided to enable trustees, staff, volunteers and committee members to perform their jobs effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people.

Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for trustees, staff, volunteers, service users and Committee members.

9. ENFORCEMENT

Greenbank recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the organisation. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

Policy Enforcement – Grievances

Any staff member or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through Greenbank's established Grievance Procedure.

Any service user who feels he/ she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through Greenbank's Chief Executive, who must report any such complaint to the Chairman of Greenbank's Council of Management. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, this should be made through the Chairman of Greenbank's Council of Management.

Any job applicant who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue in writing with the Chief Executive or the Chairman of the Council of Management.

All incidents of **direct discrimination** are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Incidents of **indirect discrimination** will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Incidents of **victimisation** or **harassment** will be dealt with in accordance with Greenbank's Harassment Procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under Greenbank's Disciplinary Procedure.

Greenbank will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination.

Policy Enforcement – Disciplinary Procedure

Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment.

Any volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from Greenbank's volunteer register.

Any member of any Committee or working group of Greenbank found in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave Greenbank.

Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from Greenbank.

10. MONITORING

Greenbank views the collection/analysis of data is vital in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on Greenbank's services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters. We will review employee turnover and seek information on reasons for leaving. Local and national data or statistics will be used to benchmark our performance.

The Trustees will review annually equality of opportunity information relating to Greenbank's services. Recruitment and selection procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Chief Executive who will report to the Chairman of the Council of Management. All aspects of personnel policies and procedures shall be kept under review to ensure that they do not operate against the Equal Opportunities Policy.

In order to determine the impact of this policy it is important that a monitoring system be developed which will measure commitment, progress and effectiveness. The Diversity and Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed as follows:

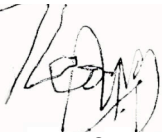
- The policy will be an agenda item at Greenbank's Senior Management meetings on an annual basis and a bi-annual basis at Council of Management
- The Chief Executive and the Chairman will undertake a bi-annual policy review. All relevant parties will be encouraged to submit comments for consideration
- The review recommendations will be presented to the next Trustee meeting for their comments and ratification

Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the Chief Executive will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.

If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of trustees, staff, volunteers or restricting service users, the Chief Executive should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.

Agreed on 15/10/07

By: Greenbank Council of Management



Leong Tan, Chairman