



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

A Touch of Gentleness is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our employees and volunteers, eliminating unlawful discrimination.

PURPOSE

We commit to:

- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all our employees and volunteers, whether temporary or long-term.
- Not unlawfully discriminate because of the following characteristics:
 - age *
 - ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality) *
 - disability *
 - gender and gender reassignment *
 - marriage and civil partnership *
 - pregnancy and maternity *
 - religion or belief *
 - sex and sexual orientation *
 - refugees and asylum seekers
 - people with diverse communication needs
 - ex-offenders

**Under the Equality Act (2010) these are known as "protected characteristics".*

OUR AIM

- For each employee and volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best.
- To oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, terms and conditions relating to volunteers, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment and volunteering, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
- In providing services and facilities:
 - to be committed against unlawful discrimination of service users or the public
 - provide services that are accessible according to need
 - create effective partnerships with all parts of our community



A Touch of Gentleness CIC
Company number: 13649433

Cherry Croft Farmhouse, Church Road, Herstmonceux. BN27 1QJ



- sustain, regularly evaluate and continually improve our services to ensure equality and diversity principles and best practice are embedded in our performance to meet the needs of individuals and groups
- work together with the community to use our best endeavours to provide accessible and relevant service provision that responds to service users' needs

OUR COMMITMENTS

We commit to:

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- This commitment includes training managers and all other employees and volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy.
 - Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help us provide equal opportunities in employment of staff and volunteers, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All staff and volunteers should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment or volunteering, against fellow employees, volunteers, service users, suppliers and the public.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, service users, suppliers, the public and any others in the course of our work activities
 - Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under our grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
 - Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic) is a criminal offence.





- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff and volunteers, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Decisions concerning staff and volunteers being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment and volunteering practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, ethnic background, sexual orientation and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy.
 - Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Our equality policy is fully supported by senior management and the directors.

Use of our grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment or a volunteer's contract.

