

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Statement of Policy

1.1 Highfields Community Association (HCA) is an anti-racist organisation and is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and the elimination of discrimination (both direct and indirect). As a charity, we have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that we promote equality in all aspects of our work and in the delivery of our services. We will ensure that our services are promoted to all and there is no discrimination based on the following protected characteristics and grounds:

- i. Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
- ii. Gender (including marital status and caring responsibilities)
- iii. Disability
- iv. Religion or belief
- v. Age
- vi. HIV Status
- vii. Political activity or beliefs (unless it conflicts with other areas of this policy)
- viii. Trade union activity
- ix. Sexual Orientation
- x. Transgender
- xi. Marriage and civil partnerships
- xii. Maternity and Paternity
- xiii. Criminal convictions (unless they are unspent and relate to discriminatory behaviour or activity)
- xiv. Immigration status (as long as it is lawful)
- xv. Class, social background or social status

1.2 In employment, we declare that our policy is to redress the balance, as far as is lawful, in favour of all minorities and disadvantaged groups.

1.3 In policy development, it is our aim to develop and implement anti-discriminatory strategies and positive action programmes and to promote these policies throughout our spheres of

influence, whilst maintaining the prime objective of HCA to the elimination of racial discrimination and inequality.

1.4 We will endeavor to establish a broad base for consultation to identify priorities and needs as reflected by the black community and other discriminated or disadvantaged groups.

Scope of the Policy

2.This Policy applies to:

- i. All staff employed by HCA and the policies and practices of HCA in discharging its employment responsibilities
- ii. Volunteers
- iii. All members of the organisation including members of all committees, whether or not they are actually HCA members – including an expectation that members of HCA concur with and actively support this policy
- iv. All services HCA provides to the general public in meeting the aims and objects of the organisation

3.Implementation

3.1 As far as is reasonably practical we will monitor and review all our practices and procedures to ensure that this Policy is effective. In particular, we will *specifically* monitor, on a continuous basis, by: *race, ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender.*

3.1.1 As far as reasonably practicable, we will make adjustments in the manner of service delivery and in our premises to improve access for disabled people.

3.2 In respect of services to the public, we will monitor

- i. casework
- ii. compliments and complaints received

3.3 The Centre has published separate Service Standards, which are made available to all clients, or on request to others. We also have a Complaints Procedure, which is available on request.

3.4 In respect of employment of staff, we will monitor:

- i. All aspects of the Centre's recruitment process.
- ii. Conditions of service
- iii. Staff development and training
- iv. Grievance and disciplinary matters. The Centre has a separate policy and procedure on these issues, which is available on request

3.5 In respect of the internal management of the Centre we will monitor:

- i. The membership of the organisation
 - ii. Membership of committees and levels of participation
 - iii. Recruitment and retention of volunteers in the office
- 3.6 Reports will be presented to the appropriate committees of HCA in light of the above monitoring on *at least* a biannual basis.

4.Consultation

- 4.1 We will consult with and involve community organisations representing historically disadvantaged/discriminated groups, especially with racial minority organisations.
- 4.2 We will also, on a regular basis, survey users of the Centre's services to ascertain their views and feedback. Results will be published annually.

5.Challenging Discriminatory Behaviour

HCA will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour or attitudes that conflict with this policy, whether or not this is expressed by staff, volunteers, and members of the organisation, clients or others. Such behaviour or attitudes should be challenged at the time an incident occurs, and *everyone* associated with the organisation is encouraged to report such matters either through HCA's Complaints Procedure (which is relevant to clients, members and volunteers) or the Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure (which applies to staff). If discrimination is proven against a staff member then disciplinary action will be taken. If discrimination is proven against any member of HCA then action will be taken under HCA's Constitution to either suspend or remove their membership of HCA. If it is proven against any client or other person visiting or independent of HCA other action will be taken, depending on the circumstances of the situation. In respect of clients this may result in the withdrawal of HCA support under the Policy on Assisting Clients.

HCA will take necessary steps to increase awareness and to foster positive attitudes at all levels in the organization toward people experiencing discrimination.

We will regularly monitor all operations to ensure no form of discrimination or harassment is taking place at the Centre.

- 5.1 A copy of the Complaints Procedure, and policy/procedures on assisting clients are available on request.

6.Positive Action

- 6.1 As far as is lawful, HCA will take positive steps to redress any imbalance in favour of minorities or other disadvantaged or discriminated groups.
- 6.2 Provision will be made for Learners who require reasonable adjustments to be made by providing suitable assessment locations and technical aids where appropriate.

Date: 24th June 2021

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Reviewed by: Priya Thamotheram – Head of Centre

Next Review Date: 24th June 2022

Policy owned by: Highfields Centre Governing Body