

COLEY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. General Statement of policy

CPCA believes that an equal opportunities approach must be embedded in the culture of the organisation. It is what we do and how we do it - our practice - that defines where we stand in relation to equal opportunities. It is not position statements or written documents that do this, although they have their place. We do not believe that organisations can ever claim to have got everything right with their approach to equal opportunities. There are always new perspectives on discrimination to be explored, new forms of oppression to be challenged and new ways of challenging them. To meet these challenges we aim to develop a learning organisation. In such an organisation, all people feel free to raise issues of equality; training and learning from each other are highly valued, monitoring and evaluation are prized tools and freedom to admit mistakes and celebrate successes are of central importance.

Unfair discrimination in our society takes many forms. It may be direct and based on overt prejudice. It may be indirect and based on lack of awareness and understanding. It may be ingrained in the operational culture of organisations, in the sense that the McPherson Report defined institutional racism.

CPCA is fundamentally opposed to all these types of discrimination and seeks to ensure that in all its activities it does not take place against individuals or groups for any of the following reasons:

- gender*
- age*
- social and economic class
- employment status
- HIV status
- physical or mental disability*
- political belief
- religion or belief*
- gender reassignment*
- race*, colour, nationality or national origin
- marital or parental status*
- sexual orientation*
- unrelated criminal conviction
- position as a carer
- status as a refugee/asylum seeker
- pregnancy and maternity*

CPCA recognises the additional legal status of the protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010 – marked with an *.

CPCA also recognises and seeks to ensure that employees, volunteers and service users are not discriminated against or suffer harassment because of an association with another individual who has a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.

Political beliefs which, in themselves, promote prejudice and discrimination (eg neo Nazism) are not tolerated by CPCA. The relevance of unspent criminal convictions is determined at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

CPCA's commitment to oppose discrimination and promote equality of access to services places an obligation on all personnel: paid staff, volunteers, trustees and committee members. It is the aim of CPCA to create a welcoming and safe working environment for paid staff, volunteers, trustees and committee members from diverse communities and to acknowledge the benefits of diversity.

Member organisations are expected to support CPCA's anti-discrimination values and, in applying for membership will be asked to endorse them. Users of CPCA's services are expected to respect the values contained in this statement. It is understood that people have different levels of awareness with regard to equal opportunities and need opportunities to learn. Nevertheless, any behaviour that is seen as oppressive or discriminatory by trustees or management will be considered a serious breach of this policy.

CPCA will take positive action to challenge disadvantage and discrimination and to promote diversity and full access to opportunity in all areas of its work and structures. By 'positive action' we mean measures undertaken with the purpose of achieving full access to opportunity for people and groups that face the consequences of past or present discrimination or disadvantage.

2. Delivery of service to users

The service users of CPCA include – all members of the public who access our services, our partners and colleagues from the voluntary and the public sector, our volunteers and trustees. In order to ensure that discrimination in delivery of services does not take place, CPCA will:

- (i) treat everyone who has contact with the organisation for whatever reason with dignity and respect.
- (ii) plan the delivery of services in a way that will not negatively affect how someone accesses our services because of a protected characteristic. In particular CPCA will consider in advance what disabled people with a range of impairments might reasonably need and make reasonable adjustments.
- (iii) take steps to establish what services are required by different sections of the community and the voluntary and community groups which represent their interests.
- (iv) seek to maximise the flow of information and support to groups and organisations based in communities which experience discrimination and social exclusion.
- (v) not permit discriminatory advertisements or news items to appear on our website
- (vi) seek to ensure that CPCA's meetings, literature, website, publicity, training events and all other forms of communication are accessible to the widest possible range of individuals and communities.
- (vii) publicise its Complaints Procedure which is available for use by any service user who believes he/she has experienced adverse discrimination on the part of the organisation.

3. The use of buildings and venues

CPCA will ensure that all visitors to our offices and events are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised when accessing our premises or venues and we will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

When selecting venues for events or training or when making decisions about office and shop space CPCA will consider the following and make reasonable adjustments:

- how people enter
- how they find their way around
- signage
- how information is provided
- how tables and counters are laid out and designed
- accessible toilet facilities.

4. Recruitment & selection of CPCA's personnel

- (i) The trustees will seek to ensure that the composition of the Board, its sub-committees, staff and volunteers, reflects that of the local community. This is vital if the voice of excluded communities is to be heard within the organisation.
- (ii) CPCA has a Recruitment & Selection Procedure for engaging paid staff. It is designed to ensure an effective but fair recruitment process which follows equal opportunities principles.
- (iii) Applicants for employment and voluntary work by CPCA will be given a copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- (iv) All new staff, volunteers and committee members will be helped to assess their equal opportunities training needs and offered appropriate training at CPCA expense.

5. Protection for employees, volunteers and partners

- (i) CPCA will not tolerate its staff, volunteers or partners to be subjected to harassment by another staff member or any third party whether they are service users or other partners and will monitor policy and staff feedback to minimise the risk and take action should an incident occur.
- (ii) Any member of staff who feels they have been subjected to harassment should raise the matter through the grievance process.
- (iii) Employees will not be subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he or she made a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or because he or she is suspected of doing so, or being about to do so.
- (iv) CPCA considers harassment to be a disciplinary offence.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

- (i) CPCA's Board of Trustees has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the agency in promoting equal opportunities and the procedures (outside the scope of this document) for addressing non compliance with the commitments of the general policy statement and equality legislation.
- (ii) The Management and Review Sub Committee has the delegated responsibility for reviewing and updating this policy document. This shall happen at least every three years.
- (iii) The Management and Review Sub Committee has the delegated responsibility for devising and implementing monitoring and evaluation exercises which, amongst other things, address the effectiveness of CPCA as an accessible and inclusive organisation. The sub committee will request an Annual Equality Audit to review:
 - the characteristics represented within our staff, volunteers and trustees
 - the accessibility of the services we provide

- any reasonable adjustments that have been made or not made during the year
- any relevant legislative changes that have occurred during the year.

Other relevant CPCA policies:

CPCA Complaints Procedure
CPCA Recruitment and Selection Policy
CPCA Grievance Procedure
CPCA Disciplinary Policy

RVA Board approved July 2013