



Little Lights Liverpool Equal Opportunities Policy

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Equal opportunities policy

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FURTHER INFORMATION	Michelle Wright
CONSULTATION	
OWNER	Karen Livesey
APPLIES TO	All staff
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APPROVING GROUP(S) AND DATE	Senior Management Team, August 2021
THIS DOCUMENT REPLACES	Equal opportunities policy in the 2021 Staff Handbook
CHANGES IN INTERIM VERSION 1.1	Re-branded. Job titles updated where applicable.
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Anti-harassment and bullying policy Disciplinary Rules and Disciplinary Procedure Grievance Procedure Family-friendly policies Dress Code

Introduction

1. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all. We aim to create an environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
2. We do not discriminate against actual or potential employees, workers, Trustees, officers, job applicants or volunteers on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**protected characteristics**).
3. This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
4. This policy covers all employees, casual workers, agency workers, consultants, contractors, Trustees, officers, job applicants or volunteers (referred to in this policy as "Staff").
5. All Staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and to treat other Staff with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other Staff, regardless of their status.
6. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Equal opportunities training

7. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Heads of Care, Heads of Fundraising, Head of Income Generation and Marketing, Finance Director, and Executive Trustee are responsible for arranging equal opportunities training for their teams (including volunteers where applicable), and for answering questions and providing information in respect of this policy.

Scope and purpose of the policy

8. This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with Staff and to relations between Staff members at all levels. It applies to all aspects of employment and volunteering with us, including job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, appraisals, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

9. We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. If you have any such requirements, please discuss these with your line manager in the first instance.

Forms of discrimination

10. You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, volunteers, officers, Trustees, patients and their families, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events, including social events.
11. **Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.
12. **Indirect discrimination** occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full-time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.
13. **Harassment** related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our **Anti harassment and bullying policy**.
14. **Victimisation** is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.
15. **Disability discrimination** is prohibited and includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Recruitment and selection of staff

16. We aim to ensure that no job applicant or potential volunteer suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above.
17. Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person. Our recruitment procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the

basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

18. Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. They should include an appropriate short policy statement on equal opportunities.
19. Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
20. Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with approval from Hethertons, our legal advisors. For example:
 - i) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
 - ii) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
 - iii) Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
 - iv) Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

21. We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective Staff, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before their engagement starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Visas and Immigration.
22. To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be under-represented or disadvantaged in our Organisation, we may monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. Any such information will be removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

- 23. Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All Staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the Organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.
- 24. Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

Termination of employment

- 25. We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- 26. We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without unlawful discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Disabilities

- 27. If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 28. If you experience difficulties in your role because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager or volunteer co-ordinator may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 29. We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access.

Agency workers

- 30. We comply with the Agency Workers Regulations to ensure that agency workers are being offered appropriate pay and benefits and access to permanent employment opportunities.

Part-time and fixed-term work

- 31. We aim to ensure that part-time and fixed-term employees are treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

32. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately; see **Family-friendly policies**.

Breaches of the policy

33. We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our **Disciplinary Procedure**. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
34. If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our **Grievance Procedure** or **Anti harassment and bullying policy**. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
35. There must be no victimisation or retaliation against Staff who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith may be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our **Disciplinary Procedure**.