

## 18.1

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date of issue:	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2011
Date of latest review/revision	27 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
This replaces any previous issue of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (formerly known as Equal Opportunities and Anti-discriminatory practice Policy)	

### Why We Have an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

South West Community Chaplaincy (SWCC) is committed to promoting the wellbeing of all people. It recognises that every person is an individual with different needs, preferences and abilities. It aims to reflect this diversity in everything it does, including making its services inclusive and accessible, and attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. SWCC believes that harnessing different life experiences, attributes and contributions from staff, volunteers and clients will make SWCC a more effective and inclusive organisation and a better place to work.

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 pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities. It also covers the treatment and conduct of volunteers.

### The Policy Statement

SWCC values diversity and inclusion. By respecting and using diversity and facilitating inclusion it can maximise its impact through meeting individual needs and staying in touch with the changing societies in which it works.

Staff and volunteers recognise and fulfil their personal role in making SWCC a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation.

SWCC has a commitment to diversity and inclusion, which is about:

- Recognising and valuing difference
- Recognising and seeking to redress inequity and disadvantage
- Treating all in a fair, open and honest manner
- Recognising the right of volunteers, employees and clients to be treated with dignity and respect

SWCC is committed to:

- Equity of opportunity
- Tackling discrimination and disadvantage through positive action
- Tackling harassment and intimidation
- Making its workforce and the organisation as a whole more representative of the diverse communities that make up the area it serves
- Encouraging other organisations to adopt similar policies on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

SWCC will not tolerate less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, gender, sexual identity, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, criminal record, place of residence, religion, faith or other beliefs, health status or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified. SWCC will never use cultural practices as a justification for, or to ignore an issue of, safeguarding.

SWCC believes that discrimination is wrong and should be actively opposed. Discrimination denies human dignity, a freedom for people to be themselves, and a place in a free society.

SWCC is primarily committed to the welfare of people who have been or are subject to a custodial or community sentence and to maintaining their individual dignity and their value to society. SWCC is also committed to a policy of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in service delivery and in employment practices and will not accept discrimination in its work.

This commitment includes training employees and volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the policy. Responsibilities include staff and volunteers conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities through positive action to support inclusivity in employment, 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, against fellow employees, volunteers, clients, suppliers and the public.

## Procedures

### Provision of Services

SWCC aims to deliver services throughout Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset to people who need them, without discriminating against anyone, stigmatising or patronising. Every client will be treated in a professional manner, with courtesy and respect. Clients of our services and those who take part in our activities will be informed that SWCC is committed to an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy so that:

- They will know a policy exists and that a copy is available to guide all members of the organisation and others to share the commitment and code of practice of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- All who come into contact with SWCC will know the standards that we are trying to achieve and have the opportunity to assist us in trying to achieve them.
- They will know they have the right to complain, if they feel these standards are not being adhered to or are dissatisfied with the service provided to them.

SWCC will make sure that its services meet the needs of its diverse communities by involving communities in identifying their needs and by seeking to meet these needs.

SWCC will develop services to make sure there is maximum take up by all communities. It will do this by:

- Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in our services and our work
- Providing information in plain English and use methods other than written documents to present information as appropriate
- Monitoring take-up of our services
- Assessing our reach and the extent to which individuals and groups who identify with protected characteristics are enabled to access our services
- Involving individuals and groups who identify with protected characteristics in our consultations and strategic planning

### Discrimination

SWCC will not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, volunteers, clients, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with clients, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their race or gender.
- Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time might adversely affect single parents because they generally have greater childcare commitments than those who co parent. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- Disability discrimination:** this 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**

SWCC will ensure that recruitment practices fulfil the requirement of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy. On becoming vacant, posts will be subject to a job analysis, conducted to ensure that there is clarity about the specific roles and responsibilities of the post, and any potential for unjustified discrimination is removed. On completion of the job analysis, the job description and person specification for the post will be amended as deemed necessary.

Vacancies should generally be advertised both internally and externally to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying, and should strive to appeal to marginalised and underrepresented groups. All posts will have a job description and person specification, which will state the required essential and desirable skills, qualifications and experience. Recognizing that requirements for formal qualifications may be prohibitive to applicants from marginalized or underrepresented groups, recruitment should be skills and experience based wherever possible, and such qualifications will only be essential where absolutely necessary.

There should be transparency, fairness and consistency in all job opportunities, formally advertising these and going through processes whether permanent, temporary, soft promotions or stepping up opportunities.

A copy of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy should be made available on request. Any decision to only advertise internally, should be justified and have the approval of the Trustees.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible. Selection panels should be diverse and panel members should undertake a bias briefing before beginning the selection process. The format for interview will be agreed before it takes place and will remain constant for all interviews for the position.

Every effort will be made to make provision for staff and volunteers with a disability through reasonable adaptations.

Posts which are deemed suitable will be advertised as available for job share and flexible working. Job shares and flexible working may also be available to staff in suitable posts on request, and providing that a suitable job-sharer may be recruited.

All staff and trustees involved in recruitment and selection will be aware of this policy and adhere to it at all times. All applicants for posts will be treated strictly on merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. As an exception, posts targeted at specific groups of people will be exempted, as allowed by legislation.

All application forms will include an optional and detachable section for Equity and Diversity monitoring, which will not be used as part of the selection process. The information will be individually confidential and used for assessing recruitment and advertising practices periodically.

An appointed person will be responsible for vetting, in confidence, applicants for sensitive posts; this may include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Reasons for the decision to appoint, or not, will be noted and kept for at least six months.

The above provisions will apply equally to the selection and appointment of salaried staff and of unpaid volunteers.

### **Part-time and fixed-term work**

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

### **Disabilities**

If an employee is disabled or becomes disabled, they are encouraged to talk about their condition so that reasonable adjustments or support may be considered as appropriate.

### **Training and Development**

The Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers need to recognise and fulfil their personal role in making SWCC a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation. SWCC will ensure that all staff and volunteers know about the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy and their responsibilities within it, by including it within Induction Training, and ensuring it has a high profile within our internal communications and practices. Additional role specific training will be undertaken to ensure understanding of and commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies and procedures as appropriate

### **Recording and Monitoring of Service Provision**

SWCC will monitor and review the take up of the service with records being kept of actions and decisions by trustees, staff and volunteers. Monitoring will be carried out on the basis of race, gender, age, place of residence, sexual orientation and disability. Provision of individual monitoring data will be supplied on a voluntary basis, using agreed categories.

### **Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees has the ultimate responsibility to provide, implement and review the policy. It is the responsibility of trustees, staff and volunteers to support the policy by ensuring that SWCC's activities promote Equity, diversity and inclusion. The Managing Community Chaplain or appointed representative holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented and, in the first instance, for dealing with or taking action on disciplinary offences.

The Board of Trustees will receive a report analysing monitoring data on an annual basis, in order to retain oversight of the impact and implementation of the policy.


### **Breaches of this policy**

SWCC takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, clients, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

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 without notice.

If an employee believes that they have suffered discrimination the matter can be raised through SWCC's Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

Employees must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

<b>Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:</b>	
<b>Name of Trustee:</b>	<b>John Wiseman (Vice Chair)</b>
<b>Date of approval by the Board of Trustees:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2011
<b>Date of 1st Review</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2013
<b>Date of 2nd Review</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2014
<b>Date of 3rd Review</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
<b>Date of 4th Review</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
<b>Date of 5th Review (major revision)</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2020
<b>Date of 6th Review</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Date of 7<sup>th</sup> Review</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
<b>Date of 8<sup>th</sup> Review</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> January 2025