



Bedfordshire and Luton VCS Infrastructure Consortium

Equality and Diversity Policy

The Voluntaryworks Consortium aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences and to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities. This Policy applies to all members of the Consortium and sets out how we aim to achieve this, the responsibilities of members and what processes will be put in place to monitor our success.

This Policy is influenced by both current legislation and policy, and also reflects the Consortium's wish to promote best practice in this area.

Communicating the Policy

All members will be made aware of the Consortium's commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity, and of their legal commitments. A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be given to all members of the Consortium. Copies will also be freely available to other interested parties on request, together with a named contact for more information.

All members will be informed of revisions to the Policy. Ongoing information and support will be provided to increase understanding of the issues and to support members in implementing the Policy and appropriate action plans.

The principles of equality and diversity will be embedded into partnership working and through revision of the Consortium's Strategic, Business and Delivery Plans.

Functions covered by the Policy

This Policy covers all activities of the Consortium, its services and projects, and will be regularly reviewed to ensure continuous improvement.

Governance and Leadership

No member shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, faith or belief, gender, sexuality, disability or age.

No member is to be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Criteria for membership and the procedures for applying for membership will be frequently reviewed to ensure that members are selected on the basis of their merits, abilities and relevance.

Publicity and Documentation

Publicity and documentation will be made available in a variety of formats on request, as appropriate.

Projects and Service Delivery

Equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity will be built into Consortium projects and activities, including business planning, consultation mechanisms and delivery.

The Consortium will seek to ensure that projects and activities are advertised and promoted in an inclusive way. Where it is identified that groups are underrepresented in accessing particular services, efforts will be made to redress the balance.

All facilitators, consultants and delivery partners who undertake work with, or on behalf of, the Consortium will be required to comply with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Consortium recognises that not everyone has access to personal transport or is able to use it and will plan its meetings, services and activities with this in mind.

Responsibilities

Consortium members are responsible for ensuring day to day implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy with overall co-ordination by the Consortium.

The Consortium will have collective responsibility for ongoing review of the policy and action plans, and will make recommendations for changes/amendments.

Members of the Consortium are expected to accept their personal responsibility for the practical application of the Policy and must ensure that they do not discriminate in any way against other members, volunteers or service users with whom their work may bring them into contact.

Specific responsibility falls upon the Chairperson of the Consortium to ensure that this Policy is disseminated and implemented.

Grievance and Complaints

Any member or service user who feels that they have been unfairly treated can, in the first instance, raise the matter through the Complaints Procedure of the Consortium member providing the service. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved an appeal may be made to the Chairperson of the Consortium who will seek to resolve the complaint in consultation with other members of the Consortium.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Appropriate mechanisms are expected to be used by member organisations to monitor the take up of the projects/activities/services delivered on behalf of the Consortium.

Baseline information will be collected and used to assess the success of the Consortium in providing relevant and accessible services to a diverse community. This information will be used to inform future service planning and delivery.

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