

Charity Number: 1156427

Somerford ARC Community Centre

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Created: June 2022



## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

### **General Statement of Policy**

Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment for everyone. We believe that diversity strengthens our community, and we actively work to create a space where all individuals, whether trustees, employees, volunteers, and service users feel valued and supported.

This policy underpins our commitment to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, and supporting a positive, equitable community for all.

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Equality Act provides essential protections against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on nine "protected characteristics."
- 1.2. As an organisation we are committed to upholding these protections and ensuring fair treatment for all. We acknowledge that discrimination remains a concern in society and aim to prevent unfair treatment in our community.
- 1.3. This commitment applies to all applicants, trustees, employees, volunteers, and service users, ensuring equal treatment regardless of:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage and civil partnership
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy aims to:

- Enhance community engagement by actively involving diverse groups in our activities.
- Increase representation within our staff and governance structures.
- Promote initiatives supporting underrepresented groups in our community

#### **3. Legislations**

- 3.1. We adhere to the following equality legislation and associated Codes of Practice:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Health and Safety at work Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018

- Equal Pay Act 1970

#### 4. Definitions

4.1. To assist working through and understanding this policy a number of key definitions need to be explained:

| Term      | Definition   |
|-----------|--|
| EDI       | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.   |
| Equality  | Ensuring everyone has equal access to opportunities that meet their needs and protecting them from unfair treatment or discrimination based on their personal characteristics. It aims to create an environment where all individuals can participate fully and fairly, without prejudice. |
| Diversity | Recognising, respecting and appreciating the differences among individuals and groups and placing a positive value on those differences.   |
| Inclusion | The degree to which individuals feel respected, valued, and actively involved within their workplace or the broader community. It focuses on creating an environment where everyone feels they belong and can fully participate.   |

#### 5. How you can be discriminated against

5.1. There are four main categories of discrimination to understand:

- **Discreet discrimination:** This is where a person is treated unfavourably or unlawfully because of a protected characteristic they possess.
- **Indirect discrimination:** This is when an organisation's policies, practices and procedures unintentionally place people with a certain characteristic at a disadvantage.
- **Associative discrimination:** This is where someone is treated less unfavourably because of a protected characteristic of someone they are associated with, such as a family member or partner.
- **Perceptive discrimination:** This is when someone is treated unfavourably or unlawfully based on an assumed protected characteristic. This applies regardless of whether the assumption is correct or not.

#### 6. Harassment

6.1. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic, intended or resulting in a violation of dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Harassment can include:

- **Unwanted Behaviour Directed at a Protected, Perceived, or Associated Characteristic:** This includes conduct aimed at an individual's actual characteristic, an assumed characteristic, or one associated with someone close to them. For example, sending

abusive messages to a person based on their ethnicity, assumed ethnicity, or the ethnicity of their partner all constitute harassment.

- **Forms of Harassment:** Various forms include verbal (e.g., Bullying, slurs), physical (e.g., unwelcome contact, and written (e.g. Inappropriate messages).
- **Impact on the Recipient:** The perception of the person experiencing the behaviour defines it as harassment, regardless of the harasser's intent.
- **Minimised as "Banter":** Individuals responsible for harassment may attempt to downplay it as "banter." However, using this term does not alter the harmful impact on those affected.
- **Impact on Witnesses:** Witnesses may feel uncomfortable or intimidated by the behaviour, and this may also be considered harassment.

## 7. **Victimisation**

- 7.1. The Equality Act gives individuals legal protection from victimisation.
- 7.2. Victimisation is where someone is treated badly because they have, plan to or are thought to have:

- Made an allegation or discrimination or harassment.
- Given evidence for a case of discrimination or harassment.
- Supported someone else who has made an allegation.
- Raised a grievance relating to Equality, Diversity or Inclusion.

## 8. **Responsibilities**

- 8.1. Trustees play a vital role in integrating Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) throughout the organisation. Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that EDI principles are incorporated into all policies, practices, and programmes within the centre.
- Facilitating regular EDI training for staff, volunteers, and board members, providing awareness and skills for creating an inclusive environment.
- Respond promptly and effectively to any instances of discrimination, harassment, or bias, in accordance with the organisations policies and procedures..
- Continuously evaluating the effectiveness of the EDI policy by using feedback, data, guidance and legislations to enhance EDI practices.
- Promote mental health awareness and ensure resources are available for all individuals who may need support.

- 8.2. Employees represent Somerford ARC Community Centre and are instrumental in providing an inclusive environment and setting a positive example for all. Responsibilities include:

- Treating all members, visitors, and colleagues with respect while recognising and valuing diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
- Providing additional support to individuals who may encounter barriers in accessing the centre's services, ensuring an inclusive experience for everyone.
- Identifying and reporting any instances of discrimination or harassment, and cooperating in investigations and resolutions.
- Engaging in continuous learning about EDI principles to enhance their awareness and skills, thereby contributing positively to the organisations inclusive culture.

- Provide an understanding of mental health issues among community members and promote available support services.

8.3. Volunteers are essential to creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. Responsibilities include:

- Welcoming and supporting community members from all backgrounds, ensuring everyone feels valued and included.
- Modelling respectful behaviour, inclusive language and actions that reflect Somerford ARC community Centres commitment to EDI.
- Reporting any EDI-related concerns or observations of inappropriate behaviour to management, helping to maintain a safe and welcoming space.
- Participating in EDI training opportunities offered by Somerford ARC Community Centre to improve understanding and application of inclusive practices.
- Provide an understanding of mental health issues among community members and promote available support services.

8.4. Hirers and Community Members contribute significantly to providing inclusivity in our organisation. We encourage all community members to:

- Engage with others respectfully and inclusively, appreciating the diverse environment of Somerford ARC Community Centre.
- Adhere to our organisations code of conduct and respect its commitment to EDI, thereby contributing positively to the community's inclusive culture.
- Provide feedback regarding their experiences at Somerford ARC Community Centre to help the board of trustees enhance EDI initiatives and address any potential concerns.
- Recognise and uphold their role in providing an inclusive space, showing consideration for everyone's rights and perspectives.

## 9. **Recruitment and Selection**

9.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to providing training for all trustees involved in recruitment to ensure that decisions are made free from conscious or unconscious discrimination. Promoting awareness of bias and equips decision-makers with the skills needed to create an equitable recruitment process.

9.2. Promotions and advancement opportunities will be based solely on merit, ensuring that all decisions align with the principles outlined in the Somerford ARC Community Centre EDI Policy ensuring that every individual has an equal chance to progress based on their abilities and contributions.

9.3. Job descriptions and personnel specifications will be developed to accurately reflect the essential requirements of each role, in accordance with this policy, helping attract suitable candidates and set clear expectations for applicants.

9.4. Our organisation will adopt a consistent and non-discriminatory approach to advertising job vacancies. This includes utilising diverse channels to reach a broad audience and ensuring that all advertisements reflect our commitment to equality and diversity.

9.5. All applicants for positions within the organisation will be treated fairly and considered based on their ability to perform the job. This commitment provides fairness for all candidates, regardless of their background.

9.6. Shortlisting and interviewing will be conducted by panels comprising multiple individuals, including representatives from diverse backgrounds, helping mitigate bias and promoting fair evaluation of all candidates.

- 9.7. Interview questions will be directly related to the requirements of the job and will avoid any discriminatory content, ensuring that evaluations are based on the candidates' suitability for the role.
- 9.8. We will not disqualify any applicant unable to complete an application form unassisted, unless personal completion is a necessary assessment of required English proficiency for the job. We strive to support all candidates in the application process.
- 9.9. Selection decisions will be made independently of any perceived biases from other trustees, employees or volunteers, ensuring that all candidates are evaluated fairly and without prejudice.
- 9.10. Applicants will be asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form (see APPENDIX 1).
- 9.11. We are committed to ensuring accessibility for all candidates throughout the recruitment process. Reasonable adjustments will be provided for applicants with disabilities, ensuring that everyone has an equitable opportunity to participate in our hiring process.

## **10. Service Provision**

- 10.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to continuously assessing our services and resources to ensure they meet the needs of all members and service users. We will evaluate accessibility, consider alternative delivery methods, and develop new services as necessary, while actively identifying and addressing any discriminatory practices.
- 10.2. All written materials produced by Somerford ARC Community Centre will reflect the diversity of our community. We will avoid reinforcing stereotypes and ensure that all trustees, employees, volunteers, and members contribute to this commitment in their work.
- 10.3. Somerford ARC Community Centre acknowledges that pregnancy and individuals acquiring a disability may require adjustments to their work conditions, we will strive to accommodate these needs to provide a supportive environment.
- 10.4. To ensure easy access to services, our organisation will provide materials in various formats, including large print and electronic versions, with all printed materials adhering to a minimum font size of 10pt.
- 10.5. Our charity acknowledges that while we aim to meet the diverse demands of our community, we may not always be able to fulfil every service request.
- 10.6. To maintain a high standard of service, we recognise that complaints may arise regarding trustees, employees, volunteers, or services. We will display information in the entrance hall detailing how to raise complaints, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- 10.7. Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to accommodating flexible arrangements for employees and volunteers to observe their religious practices and take holidays associated with religions beyond Christianity, within operational constraints.
- 10.8. We will ensure that our facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities, removing physical barriers to participation in our services.
- 10.9. All communication will utilise language that is clear and suitable for the intended audience, avoiding jargon to ensure that our messages are easily understood by everyone.
- 10.10. Our charity is dedicated to gathering regular feedback from service users regarding the accessibility and relevance of our services to improve and enhance our offerings to better meet the diverse needs of the community.
- 10.11. As an organisation we are committed to respecting the confidentiality and privacy of all trustees, employees, volunteers and service users. Sensitive information regarding disabilities, personal circumstances, or any other confidential matters will be handled with the utmost care and only shared with authorised personnel when necessary.

## **11. Training and development**

- 11.1. As part of the induction process, all new employees and volunteers will receive a handbook that clearly outlines their code of conduct and responsibilities in relation to the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy.
- 11.2. Biannual refresher sessions will be provided to all staff and volunteers to enhance their understanding of EDI principles, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide an inclusive environment.
- 11.3. Our organisation welcomes feedback from participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programs and to identify areas for improvement.

## **12. Selection for Redundancy**

- 12.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre will ensure that the criteria used for selecting individuals for redundancy do not discriminate against any personnel on any protected characteristics.
- 12.2. The criteria for redundancy will be clearly defined and communicated to all employees, ensuring transparency in the process.
- 12.3. Affected employees will be consulted throughout the redundancy process, allowing them to discuss their concerns and provide input.
- 12.4. The selection process will be objective and based on relevant factors such as skills, experience, and performance, rather than subjective criteria.
- 12.5. Support services, including counselling and career advice, will be made available to employees who are facing redundancy to help them transition.
- 12.6. The redundancy process will be regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure compliance with EDI principles and to identify any potential discriminatory practices.

## **13. Representation**

- 13.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre will ensure that all trustees, employees, and volunteers representing our organisation off-site are committed to upholding the principles and best practices outlined in this policy.

## **14. Grievances and Complaints**

- 14.1. All complaints of discrimination, regardless of how minor they may seem, will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated in accordance to the Somerford ARC Community Centre Complaints Policy and Grievance Policy.
- 14.2. Trustees, employees and volunteers wishing to raise a complaint should follow the procedures outlined in the Somerford ARC Community Centre Grievance Policy.
- 14.3. Service users and third parties should utilise the Somerford ARC Community Centre Complaints Policy to address their grievances.
- 14.4. The outcome of any investigation into a complaint or grievance will be communicated to the complainant, and any findings may lead to appropriate action under the Disciplinary Policy.
- 14.5. Complaints against contractors will be taken seriously and may result in termination of the contract, depending on the severity of the issue.
- 14.6. All complaints will be treated with confidentiality, and individuals raising complaints will be protected from retaliation for participating in the process.
- 14.7. Investigations will be carried out promptly, and efforts will be made to resolve complaints or grievances in accordance with the relevant policies from the date they are received.
- 14.8. Complainants have the right to appeal the outcome of their complaint, and the process for doing so will be outlined in the relevant policies.

14.9. Investigators responsible for handling complaints will be trained to ensure a fair, sensitive, and impartial investigation process.

| Associated Policies and Procedures |
|------------------------------------|
| Harassment and Bullying Policy     |
| Recruitment and Selection Policy   |
| Confidentiality Policy             |
| Complaints Policy                  |
| Grievance Policy                   |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Created by |  |
| Print name | Lauren Biggs  |
| Role       | Office Manager  |
| Date       | 20-06-2022  |

| Review History | Reviewed by  | Validated by  |
|----------------|--------------|---|
| 20-06-2022     | Lauren Biggs |  |
| 01-11-2024     | Lauren Biggs |   |

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Next review date | 01-11-2026 |
|------------------|------------|

## APPENDIX 1

# Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form

Somerford ARC Community Centre wants to meet the aims and commitments set out in its equality policy. This includes not discriminating under the Equality Act 2010, and building an accurate picture of the make-up of the workforce in encouraging equality and diversity.

The organisation needs your help and co-operation to enable it to do this, but filling in this form is voluntary. The information provided will be kept confidential and will be used for monitoring purposes.

If you have any questions about the form contact [info@somerfordarc.com](mailto:info@somerfordarc.com)

---

### **Sex and gender identity**

#### **What is your sex?**

Female  Male  Prefer not to say

#### **Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

If the gender you identify with is not the same as your sex registered at birth, please write in:

---

**Age** 16-24  25-29  30-34  35-39  40-44  45-49  50-54  55-59  60-64  65+  Prefer not to say

---

#### **What is your ethnicity?**

Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong. Please tick the appropriate box

#### **Asian or Asian British**

Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi  Chinese  Prefer not to say   
Any other Asian background, please write in:

#### **Black, African, Caribbean or Black British**

African  Caribbean  Prefer not to say   
Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, please write in:

#### **Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean  White and Black African  White and Asian  Prefer not to say   
Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background, please write in:

#### **White**

English  Welsh  Scottish  Northern Irish  Irish   
British  Gypsy or Irish Traveller  Prefer not to say

Any other White background, please write in:

#### **Other ethnic group**

Arab  Prefer not to say  Any other ethnic group, please write in:

---

#### **Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

What is the effect or impact of your disability or health condition on your work? Please write in here:

The information in this form is for monitoring purposes only. If you believe you need a 'reasonable adjustment', then please discuss this with your manager, or the manager running the recruitment process if you are a job applicant.

---

**What is your sexual orientation?**

Heterosexual  Gay  Lesbian  Bisexual  Asexual  Pansexual   
Undecided  Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own identity, please write in:

---

**What is your religion or belief?**

No religion or belief  Buddhist  Christian  Hindu  Jewish

Muslim  Sikh  Prefer not to say  If other religion or belief, please write in:

**What is your working pattern?**

---

Full-time  Part-time  Prefer not to say

---

**What is your flexible working arrangement?**

None  Flexi-time  Staggered hours  Term-time hours

Annualised hours  Job-share  Flexible shifts  Compressed hours

Homeworking  Prefer not to say  If other, please write in:

---

**Do you have caring responsibilities? If yes, please tick all that apply**

None

Primary carer of a child/children (under 18)

Primary carer of disabled child/children

Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)

Primary carer of older person

Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)

Prefer not to say

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Signature |  |
| Date      |  |

**Data protection:** The information that you provide here will only be used for the purposes of this form. We will not pass the details recorded on this form to any other Organisation without your permission. We will not store your data for any longer than two years following termination with the organisation.