**West Wilts Child Contact Centre**

**Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 West Wilts Child Contact Centre (WWCCC) strives for high standards both as a volunteer user and as a provider of services. In so doing, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.

1.2 This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for WWCCC to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation.

1.3 Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action.

1.4 WWCC aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring.

and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. WWCCC is committed to reviewing this policy on an annual basis. Through our training, publications, interaction with members and other activities, WWCCC will ensure those we work with know our statements of policy.

1.5 WWCCC will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

**2. Definitions**

2.1 Equal Opportunities ensures that policies, procedures, and practice within NACCC do not discriminate against the people within it. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of who they are, their background or their lifestyle.

2.2 Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and can maximise their potential and contribution to NACCC and to the community. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient, and more innovative.

2.3 Direct Discrimination occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or sex. Also because of, for example, marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory, or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.

2.4 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition, which although it applies equally to persons of all groups, is such that only a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it. Examples: a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified.

2.5 Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted rights under the Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act or the Disability Discrimination Act or acted as a whistle-blower on such activity. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

2.6 Harassment means repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions, or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an employee or participant or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual.

2.7 Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures would normally take the form of additional training. 'Positive discrimination' at the point of selection for work is not permissible.

**WWCCC urges volunteers and committee members to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests, and characteristics of individuals.**

1. **Policy**

**Statements Diversity**

3.1 WWCCC will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity, and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and communities.

3.2 WWCCC encourages all people it works with to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

3.3 The way we work, train, and learn within WWCCC reflects both the Mission and Objectives of and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

3.4 WWCCC will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees, staff, and volunteers to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in WWCCC work.

3.5 WWCCC will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the

importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

**Equal Opportunities**

3.6 WWCCC is an equal opportunities organisation and provider of services. No person should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory, or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities. Nor will such person be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This principle applies to all activities carried out by the centre.

**4. Aims and Objectives**

* 1. The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

1. To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services.
2. To ensure equal access to jobs and volunteer opportunities
3. To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality (Disabled Persons Employment Acts of 1944 and 1958, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)
4. To create environments free from harassment and discrimination.
5. To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers, and members.
6. To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to WWCCC ‘s work.
7. To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in WWCCC.
8. To ensure, through positive action and so far, as is practicable, that all premises and services are accessible to all people.
9. To ensure that employment and advancement within the organisation is determined by objective criteria and personal merit.

**5. Policy Implementation: Expectations**

5.1 WWCCC recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and NACCC will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities.

5.2 Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Trustees. The overall co- ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to West Wilts Child Contact Centre However, believes that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality. Therefore:

5.3 WWCCC expects individuals:

1. to co-operate with measures introduced by NACCC to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity, and non-discrimination.
2. not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other employee or participant on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory, or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.
3. to feel sufficiently confident to inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

5.4 WWCCC expects our volunteers carrying out interviews and those dealing with grievances:

1. to ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained, and regular reviews of employment practices are carried out.
2. to ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with NACCC's Grievance Policy and Procedure
3. to ensure that individuals within their area are aware of their legal responsibilities, and the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy
4. to promote actively the benefits of employee and participant diversity, in employment, services and training.

5.5 The person with responsibility for Equality and Diversity will:

* 1. ensure Trustees and Volunteers are appraised regularly on the state of equal opportunities and diversity within WWCCC.
  2. ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated documents are reviewed on an annual basis.
  3. review and approve policies, procedures and practices that impact on equal opportunities and diversity practice.
  4. co-ordinate the delivery of an equality and diversity strategy and action plan.

1. **Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion**
   1. WWCCC strives to ensure that our committee members and volunteers and volunteers reflect the wider community.

WWCCC does not employ paid staff but may pay the co-ordinator. Information on the role of a volunteer at the centre will be supplies to prospective volunteers before interview. The purpose pf the interview is to establish that the candidate fully understands the role of a volunteer and that he/she wishes to become a volunteer. It is also to establish the candidate’s suitability to be a volunteer. Discrimination on any of the grounds given in para 3.6 that cannot be justified.

The interview panel must take extreme care not to ask discriminatory questions unrelated to the requirements of the job, e.g., race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory, or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.

Job titles that are discriminatory must be avoided.

**7. Policy Implementation: Training**

7.1 In line with the intentions of this policy, will not discriminate in the provision of training courses/ opportunities wherever possible.

7.2 Appropriate training will be provided to enable trustees, staff, volunteers, and Committee members to perform their jobs effectively. The training offered will consider the needs of all people.

7.3 Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for trustees, staff, volunteers, and Committee members.

**8. Enforcement**

8.1 WWCCC recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the organisation. The effectiveness of the policy’s aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

**9. Policy Enforcement – Grievances and Enforcement**

9.1 Any volunteer or volunteer applicant who feels that they have been unfairly treated, harassed, or victimised contrary to the intentions of this policy should report the matter to the chair. The chair will investigate the incident(s) and take appropriate action which may include additional training or disciplinary action if the complaint is proved.

9.2 WWCCC will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination.

**10. Monitoring**

WWCCC will monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The centre will collect Equal Opportunities statistics required by NACCC.

This policy will be reviewed at least on an annual basis by the management committee. It will be revised if this is required.

Signed Signed

Position Position

Date Date