Bishop Creighton House

Equal Opportunities Policy

# Introduction

Bishop Creighton House (BCH) aims to provide resources and services that recognise and value the diversity of our local community.

In all areas of our operations, we abide by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, which replaces the [Equal Pay Act 1970](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_Pay_Act_1970), the [Sex Discrimination Act 1975](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_Discrimination_Act_1975), the [Race Relations Act 1976](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_Relations_Act_1976), the [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability_Discrimination_Act_1995) and three major [statutory instruments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statutory_instruments) protecting discrimination in employment on grounds of [religion or belief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_Equality_(Religion_or_Belief)_Regulations_2003), [sexual orientation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_Equality_(Sexual_Orientation)_Regulations_2003) and [age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_Equality_(Age)_Regulations_2006).

BCH observes the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s Codes of Practice on Employment, Equal Pay and Services, Public Functions and Associations.

To help staff, trustees and volunteers in its implementation, a link to the Equality & Human Rights Commission’s guidance on the Equality Act can be found below.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/>

1. Vision Statement

* BCH is committed to promoting equal opportunities for its staff, volunteers and users.
* BCH values diversity and encourages fairness and justice.
* BCH wants equal chances for its staff, volunteers and users to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation.
* BCH will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and, wherever possible, will use its influence to help overcome discriminatory barriers.

2. To achieve this vision, BCH will strive to:

* Encourage equality of opportunity for all people.
* Eliminate any conditions, procedures and individual behaviour that can lead to discrimination even where there was no intent to discriminate, with particular regard to race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, religion and belief and employment issues, whilst recognising that individuals may experience disadvantage on more than one level.
* Offer services fairly to all people, ensuring that anyone in contact with the organisation is treated with respect, making provision for those groups within the community whose needs and expectations are less well met.
* Comply with all legislation dealing with discrimination and the promotion of equality, following the codes of practice issued to support this legislation.
* Ensure all employment policies, procedures and guidelines reflect and reinforce BCH’s commitment to equality.
* Ensure mechanisms are in place for responding to complaints of discrimination and harassment from staff, volunteers and the public.
* Work toward the empowerment of those in the community less able to access our services, but equally, recognise the right of individuals not to participate.
* Make this policy known to all staff, job applicants, volunteers, local people and partner organisations.
* Operate procurement practices and partnership arrangements that ensure that those organisations working with us, and for us and our users, have similar policies that cover equal opportunities.

3. Responsibility

* Overall responsibility for the implementation and regular review of this policy lies with the Chief Executive.
* S/he will ensure that all equal opportunities issues are appropriately handled, impact upon all other relevant policies and documentation if applicable, and that all staff, volunteers and users are briefed and kept up to date with any initiatives or legislative changes which have an impact on equality issues.
* Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that staff and volunteers comprehend and implement this policy is delegated to line managers.
* Trustee approval is required for changes to the policy.

4. Operational Guidelines

#### 4.1. Accessibility Guidelines

* BCH's services must be accessible to and appropriate for all the members of the community who might wish or need to use them (within any eligibility criteria that may apply in some projects).
* BCH will take all reasonable steps to ensure its employment arrangements are accessible.

**To achieve this, BCH will strive to:**

* Facilitate physical access into its building. Where we are unable to, we will provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service in question available to all users.

* Monitor and evaluate accessibility in order to make improvements. In particular using consultation to understand the needs and expectations of service users, potential users and staff and volunteers.
* Use communication methods that are appropriate and sensitive.
* As far as is possible, ensure that all its policies, publicity and information aid understanding of its equal opportunities policy, and that positive or explanatory images, large print, the use of appropriate languages, or the availability of translation will be used as necessary. All policies and publicity materials will be made available on request.
* Publicise the variety of ways in which services can be accessed.
* Improve the accessibility of employment arrangements or physical features of the workplace to meet the needs of staff and applicants with disabilities or other needs.
* Work with partner organisations to enhance access to services across the Borough.
* Explore multi-channel access to information and services that extend choice and convenience to users and volunteers.

##### 4.2. Employment Guidelines

BCH is committed to ensuring that all its employment policies, procedures, guidelines and circulars will reflect and reinforce BCH’s commitment to equality. Through our policies, we will strive to create a

* Prejudice-free and supportive working environment.
* Workforce which reflects the diversity of the local population, ensuring that people from all sections of the community have equality of opportunity to obtain employment in all areas and levels of BCH.

**To achieve this BCH will strive to:**

* Ensure that all staff are recruited and promoted on the basis of ability and other objective relevant criteria.
* Work towards ensuring that its workforce better represents the community it serves.
* Be committed to equality of opportunity for all people and protect against all forms of discrimination, with a particular regard to gender; race; disability; religious belief; age; sexuality.
* Ensure that it communicates job opportunities to all sections of the community. We will scrutinise the recruitment process to ensure that we do not discriminate or discourage applications from any section of the community.
* Ensure that all its staff who are part of the recruitment selection panel are trained on equalities issues.
* Collect and use recruitment information to support a fair and effective recruitment process.

4.3. Training and Organisational Development Guidelines

**BCH will:**

* Seek to ensure that all staff are developed by the provision of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities in line with organisational needs.
* Include equalities training as part of its induction programme.
* Expect all staff, volunteers, and trustees to understand and help implement the equal opportunities policy. BCH will undertake to provide the time and funds needed for any training deemed necessary.

4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines

**BCH will:**

* Continually monitor its workforce and volunteer profile against the community profile to work towards a workforce and volunteer team that is reflective of the community it serves.
* Specifically monitor recruitment, promotion, and training opportunities and take up of training, pay, grievance, disciplinary and exit from employment.
* Monitor take-up of services by clients, and strive to ensure tha service provision is reflective of the local community.
* Continue to review its monitoring processes to comply with changes in legislation.
* Undertake to review all monitoring and evaluation findings annually.
  1. Other Guidance
* All staff, volunteers and users will be responsible for the implementation of this policy as it applies to their roles and responsibilities in executing the work of BCH.
* Bishop Creighton House staff, volunteers, and trustees must, at all times, treat clients, service users, colleagues and each other with dignity and respect. People’s feelings must be respected at all times, and language that is deemed offensive must not be used. This includes ‘jokes’ and humour that are commonly understood to be sexist, racist, homophobic, or derogatory to a person with a disability, learning disability, or mental health needs.
* BCH will not accept harassment, abuse, or intimidation of, or by its staff, volunteers, trustees or users. All incidents and reporting of incidents, will be treated seriously and dealt with in accordance with relevant policies. This also applies to all incidents of unwanted physical contact, verbal inferences, gestures, and the sending and receiving of electronic communications. BCH’s representatives reserve the right to seek advice and, where necessary, take legal proceedings.
* Serious breach of these guidelines may lead to disciplinary action being taken against staff, withdrawal of services to clients, or withdrawal of volunteering opportunities.
* The Chief Executive is available to listen to and take seriously all comments, praise, or complaints about equal opportunities, or any other issues. Alternatively, issues can be raised through a staff member of your choice. Or to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Contact details are given in Appendix 1. We will respond to queries verbally within 5 working days.

#### 5. Supporting statements

* Race Equality

BCH is committed to promoting a cohesive society and eliminating unlawful racial discrimination. The charity will promote equality of opportunity and good relations between staff, volunteers and users of different racial, national and ethnic groups.

* Disability Equality

BCH will not treat a person less favourably, directly or indirectly on the basis of his/her disability or health status and will promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

* Gender Equality

BCH will not treat a person less favourably directly or indirectly due to gender or marital status.

* Equality of Employment

BCH will, through its policies and training, seek to create:

* A prejudice free and supportive working environment;
* A workforce which reflects the diversity of the local population ensuring that people from all sections of the community have equality of opportunity to obtain employment in all areas and levels of BCH.
* Accessibility

BCH's services must be accessible and appropriate for all members of the community who might wish or need to use them (within any eligibility criteria that might apply in some Projects). BCH will ensure its employment arrangements are accessible.

* Sexual Orientation

BCH will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of sexual orientation.

* Gender Reassignment

BCH will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender reassignment.

* Religion and Belief

BCH will not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of religion or belief.  
(This is defined as any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. It excludes philosophical or political beliefs unless those beliefs are similar to a religious belief, e.g. the belief has a profound affect on the person's way of life.)

* Age

A person's age will not lead to unfair discrimination