



Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

Cottage Autism Network is committed to Equality of Opportunity for existing and potential Volunteers. The purpose of this Equal Opportunity / Diversity Policy is to create a workplace which provides for Equal Opportunities for all volunteers, staff and potential staff and where their dignity is protected and respected at all times.

All persons regardless of Gender, Marital status, Race, Religious beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age or member of the Traveling Community will be provided with equality of access to employment and volunteering opportunities and also encouraged and assisted to achieve their full potential. We will foster a genuine culture of equality in our Organisation.

Objectives

The aim of the policy in terms of employment and volunteering is to ensure that no job applicant, volunteer applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified.

Responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring the provision Equality of Opportunity rest primarily with our Organisation.

Managers and Supervisors have particular responsibility to engender respect for difference and to accommodate Diversity where appropriate. All staff and volunteers have important role to play in

ensuring Equality of Opportunity throughout the Organisation. It is also recognised that individual employees on behalf of our organisation have responsibilities in law are

- Required to Co- operate with any measures introduced by the company to promote Equal Opportunities.
- Must not themselves, either directly or indirectly, discriminate against fellow employees or volunteers or harass or intimidate them in anyway.

Structures

Our organisation is committed to ensuring the board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy.

This policy will be communicated at every level within the organisation in a range of formats through various media.

We will undertake an Equality review and prepare an action plan on foot of this and maintain a monitoring system.

Recruitment and Selection

Our Organisation will select those suitable for volunteer positions solely on the basis of merit.

Job and volunteer advertisements, application forms and publicity material will encourage applications from all suitable candidates will not be discriminate intentionally against any group or individual on unjustifiable grounds.

The objective is to target the widest possible pool of potential applicants and ensure that all candidates have Equality of access to all job and volunteer vacancies. We will seek to ensure a creative approach to our advertising that affirms Diversity and attracts the widest pool of candidates.

Where possible practicable efforts will be made to ensure that interview panels come from diverse backgrounds. We will ensure that interviewers are trained to conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way and that questions will be asked of all candidates and evaluated in the same way and interviewers will be careful not to ask questions which might be taken as discriminatory.

Selection will be on merit and those who are successful shall demonstrate their suitability for employment (or volunteer position) according to pre-determined volunteer related selection criteria which will be consistently applied throughout the recruitment process.

Equal of Opportunity will also include accommodating where possible and special needs of individuals to facilitate the participation in the Recruitment & Selection process.

Career Development and Training

Opportunities for Career Development and Training will be open to all and will not discriminate directly or indirectly on any grounds outlined in 1998 Act. All employees will be provided with every opportunity to acquire the range of Training, Skills and experience necessary for their career development.

Opportunities for training will be based on the requirements of the job (volunteer position) and Career Development will be based on people's abilities and merit. Our Organisation is committed to a relevant training and career development policy for all staff irrespective of background.

Promotion

All Categories of staff will be encouraged to prepare, plan and consider themselves for promotion. All eligible employees will be made aware of promotional opportunities and encouraged to compete.

Conditions governing access to promotion competitions will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on any of the nine grounds. Unnecessary barriers to promotion will be removed and employees facilitated to compete by all means possible. Promotion and Re-grading will be decided on objective criteria to the requirements of the job and will not influence by any of the nine grounds.

Complaints and Redress

All complaints from employees and Volunteers in relation to employment Equality or alleged discrimination will be handled in accordance with grievance procedures. Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting a volunteer or a Board member. Our Organisation is committed to ensuring that all issues

concerning alleged breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

Harassment and Bullying

Our Organisation is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment that is free of harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying and within which all members of staff and volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect. All employees and volunteers have an obligation to prevent and eliminate Bullying & Harassment.

Review and Monitoring

Progress in the areas of Equal Opportunities and Diversity will be gauged through the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Equal Opportunities/Diversity strategy. All aspects of this Equality will be monitored and reviewed by the Board.

Updated: May 2023