



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

### **Executive Summary**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy sets out Gamesley Community Group's (GCG) commitment to ensuring fair, respectful and non-discriminatory treatment for all staff, volunteers, trustees, clients, contractors and visitors. The policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of all nine protected characteristics—age, disability, race, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marital status or civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity—as well as wider workplace and service-related discrimination.

### **Purpose and Scope**

This policy applies across all areas of employment, volunteering, governance, service delivery and partnership work. It ensures equality of opportunity in recruitment, training, development, progression, decision-making, and access to services. It also underpins other organisational policies, including grievance, disciplinary, harassment, data protection and safeguarding.

### **Commitments and Standards**

GCG commits to creating a workplace and service environment that is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. Trustees are responsible for promoting dignity, respect and positive behaviours across the organisation. All staff, volunteers and trustees must understand their responsibilities and may be held personally accountable for discriminatory actions carried out during their work.

The organisation is committed to inclusive practice, ensuring that individual differences are recognised and valued, and that opportunities for development and progression are based on merit. Complaints of discrimination or harassment are taken seriously and addressed via appropriate disciplinary or grievance processes.

### **Communication and Accessibility**

GCG is responsible for identifying and responding to the information and communication needs of staff, volunteers and clients, including those with disabilities or sensory impairments. Communication needs must be recorded, flagged in the relevant systems, and acted upon using appropriate formats such as easy-read, large print, audio, email, SMS or access to communication professionals. Regular monitoring ensures that needs continue to be met.

### **Operational Application: Employer and Service Provider**

As an employer, GCG ensures that recruitment, selection, training, promotion, and employment conditions are fair, transparent and free from bias. Discriminatory behaviour is treated as misconduct and may lead to dismissal. As a service provider, GCG seeks to remove barriers to access for clients and volunteers, making reasonable adjustments where required. The organisation reviews services and policies to ensure they do not disadvantage individuals or groups.

### **Monitoring and Governance**

The Chief Officer and Board of Trustees monitor workforce composition, organisational practices and the implementation of the EDI policy. The policy is reviewed regularly to remain compliant with legislation and informed by best practice. Trustees play a key role in ensuring that the organisation operates inclusively, fairly and in alignment with its values.

## Introduction

This policy aims to outline Gamesley Community Group's [GCG] commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for staff, workers, volunteers, trustees, and clients in terms of employment and access to services; and to provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice. It will also outline GCG's commitment to providing information that is understandable and accessible to all.

## Scope

The policy applies to employees directly employed by GCG, to workers employed via agencies, visitors to GCG, contractors in terms of employment, trustees, volunteers and clients in terms of service provision. The policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equalities Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or cultural beliefs
- Gender reassignment
- Marital status and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

This policy also applies to other forms of unlawful discrimination including:

- Pay and benefits
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Dealing with grievances and discipline
- Dismissal
- Redundancy
- Leave for parents
- Requests for flexible working
- Selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities.

This generic policy applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to Discipline, Grievance, Harassment and Complaints (See Employee/Volunteer Handbook for full details of role relevant policies and procedures). This policy should be read in conjunction with the Data Protection Policy and the Equality Policy within the Employee Handbook.

## General Purpose

GCG's practices will ensure that clients, staff, volunteers and trustees will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, race, sex, religion or cultural beliefs, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity.

GCG's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

- Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination – when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.

- Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination - direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment – potential liability for the harassment of staff by others such as clients.
- Victimisation – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or it is thought that they have done so.

GCG is also committed to meeting the communication needs of any sensory impaired or disabled person are as set out below:

- Ask people if they have any information or communication needs and find out how to meet their needs.
- Record those needs in a set way.
- Highlight a person’s file (HR File for employees, Elemental/Charitylog for clients, or Charitylog for Volunteers), so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and explain clearly how these will be met.
- Share information about a person’s needs with other appropriate providers, when they have consent or permission to do so.
- Act to make sure that people get information in an accessible way and provide communication support if they need it.

## **Commitments**

GCG commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and within our activities, as they are good practice and make business sense.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients, volunteers, suppliers and the public.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, clients, volunteers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
6. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

GCG is also committed to meeting the communication needs of all staff, clients and volunteers, and ensuring that people receive information in accessible formats.

- All service enquiries to GCG will be recorded on a standard data capture form by the relevant member of staff to establish whether the client or volunteer has any communication or information needs.
- If communication or information needs are identified, they will be recorded on the relevant database as described above.
- Use appropriate and agreed communication methods to ensure the client or volunteer can access relevant information. The methods may include:
  - a. Email
  - b. Text message
  - c. Audio
  - d. Easy read or large print
  - e. Assisting in arranging support from a communication professional.
- Utilise electronic flags on the relevant database which will ensure other staff members are aware of the agreed communication methods for the particular client or volunteer.
- Regularly review communication needs identification, processing and monitoring to ensure client or volunteer needs are still being met.
- Other methods may include utilising closed captions on videos, image descriptions on Social Media and providing materials as required specifically for those who are sight impaired.

## **The Policy in Practice – GCG as an Employer**

GCG aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in the context of the policy. Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy. All training opportunities will be published widely to all appropriate employees and not in such a way so as to exclude particular groups. GCG regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of clients, staff, volunteers and trustees in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

### **The Policy in Practice - GCG as Service Provider**

In developing its products and services, GCG will seek to ensure access to all clients and volunteers, and potential clients and volunteers. This will include, wherever practicable, making specific access arrangements for its clients and volunteers with disabilities or learning difficulties, or any other protected characteristic which may apply, such as religion and belief. GCG will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed by the Chief Officer and the Board of Trustees on an ongoing basis and amended in line with new developments in Equality and Diversity best practice.