

South Oxford Community Association Equalities and Diversity Policy

Aims:

South Oxford Community Association aims to provide services from the Community Centre, in Lake Street, that meet the needs of the local community and are accessible to all who wish to use them. We aim to be an equal opportunity employer and value the contribution made by volunteers, encouraging volunteers from a cross-section of the community to represent the make up of our local area.

We aim to create an association that is inclusive and promotes diversity and equality throughout its activities and organisation.

We are aware that discrimination can occur in different ways, including that based on:

Age

Gender, including gender identity and gender reassignment

Sexual orientation

Race

Disability

Religion or belief

Marriage or civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

All organisations have duties from legislation to:

Eliminate unlawful racial and disability discrimination

Promote equality of opportunity

Promote positive attitudes to disability

Promote good race relations between people of different ethnic origin

Consider how to eliminate harassment

Encourage the participation of people with a disability in the life of the community

Take into account gender, including gender identity issues,

Avoid age discrimination.

To achieve this we will strive to:

Increase the accessibility of information for people who use our services.

Actively encourage participation in events at the Centre, through local publicity in a variety of locations, word of mouth, web-site, personal contact, liaison with partners and neighbouring professionals and groups e.g. Health Centre, Children's Centre, local schools, religious centres.

Promote a Community Centre ethos that is welcoming, inclusive and that challenges discrimination in its different forms. Create a culture within the association that encourages members to challenge language, attitude or action that may cause offence or discrimination, or that is derogatory racist or sexist. Consider ways to reach those for whom English is an additional language.

Value and respect people's feelings and treat all people with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Incidents of discrimination will be taken seriously, a record kept and the Management Committee will consider action such as excluding offender from the Community Centre or informing police. If an incident involves a member of staff, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined in the conditions of service.

Adopt inclusive recruitment and retention practices. Ensure that those responsible for recruiting staff are aware of good recruitment practice, seeking to positively promote diversity and equality, including appropriate advertising of vacancies, suitable standards for application forms, short-listing & interviewing, monitoring the diversity of applicants, taking up references, checking their entitlement to work and providing appropriate, up to date, person specifications for each post.
(see also *Employment Policy*)

Consider training opportunities for staff and committee members to enable them to be confident in challenging bad practice and recognising the benefits of promoting diversity and equality in all situations.

Remind users of the Centre of their responsibilities towards equality and diversity and ask them to consider these issues when running activities and groups for the community from the Centre. We will do this in our hire agreements.

We will undertake audits to ensure our building is accessible to everyone. We will seek to maximise opportunities to listen to and learn from the experiences of people who use our services. For example, regular surveys of local community, user groups and comment book/suggestion box. **Monitor** the use made of the Centre by local people and compare this to local demographic information. Where there appear to be discrepancies the Management Committee will consider why this should be and whether the Centre needs to look at solutions to provide access or services for any under-represented groups to services not provided elsewhere.

Actively pursue good physical access for all by considering such issues as: lifts, handrails, signage, paint colours, surface texture.

Achieve equal access and participation at the Centre by:

As long as financially viable undertaking to have a discount hire rate available for charitable groups, local support groups, those on lower incomes, small scale local events supporting good and charitable causes (e.g. school PTA, Children in Need...) (See Discounted Room Hire Policy)

Reimbursing volunteers all reasonable expenses, provided these are agreed in advance, by the Management Committee (see Volunteering Policy) so that no-one assisting the Centre as a volunteer is out of pocket.

Adopted by the Management Committee meeting held on Monday 8 June 2015; reviewed 14 th September 2016
Signed on Behalf of the Committee by:
Chairperson BOB PRICE
14 th September 2016

The legal framework for this policy includes:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989,2004
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001