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The Leaside Trust

Equality and Diversity Policy

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Introduction

The Leaside Trust is an organisation that believes strongly in equality and is committed to actively opposing all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure no client, job applicant, employee, secondee, volunteer (including Trustees) or grantee is unfairly or unlawfully discriminated against in their dealings with the Leaside Trust.

We welcome diversity and recognise the contributions of all individuals. We aim to ensure equality of opportunity by adopting an equitable approach to all that we do and by working to ensure there is no unlawful or unfair discrimination in our policies or practices (formal or informal). This includes reasons associated with the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We recognise that the people who use our services are individuals with different needs which will be related to numerous factors, these may impact on their ability to access many services in our community including our own services. We will sometimes therefore set up and deliver projects that will work expressly with specific groups in accordance with our Business Plan. We will also work hard to ensure that all of those individuals who fit our project criteria truly have the opportunity to use the services we offer.

All that we do will reflect our approach to equality and good diversity practice.

Scope

This Policy applies to all areas of the Leaside Trust's work and applies to all Trustees, all staff, trainees, consultants, volunteers and secondees. The principles set out in this policy will also be reflected in all contracts and project plans. We will expect anyone with whom we undertake a contract to adhere to this policy or demonstrate that they have their own appropriate equality policy and practices in place.

Responsibility

The Trustees are responsible for the effective operation of the Leaside Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy and have delegated responsibility to the Managing Director on a day-to-day basis. All those working for the Leaside Trust have a duty to implement our Equality and Diversity Policy.

Employees, secondees, volunteers and Trustees have a duty to ensure that they act in accordance with this policy and to facilitate it achieving the aim of enabling equality for all, good diversity management and the prevention of unfair or unlawful discrimination.

Implementation

We will:

- Promote our equality and diversity aims with our employees, partners and other stakeholders
- Ensure that the Trustees, employees and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in implementing this Policy
- Offer training for the Trustees and employees to enable them to understand and implement this Policy
- Expect compliance with and commitment to this Policy and take action if any individual is found not to be complying
- Take appropriate action to deal with discrimination, harassment and victimisation by or against a member of staff, volunteer, secondee or Trustee
- Carry out recruitment, selection and promotion in accordance with this policy
- Ensure that our commitment to equality is plainly communicated in all policies and procedures and clear in our practices.
- Comply with all relevant legislation including The Equality Act 2010

Policy into Practice

Recruitment, Employment and Promotion

We will:

- Operate fair and inclusive recruitment and employment practices to achieve our operational needs.
- Strive to achieve equality of opportunity in all areas of employment.
- Seek to maintain a diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. (See our Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure).

If an agency is commissioned to undertake recruitment on the Leaside Trust's behalf they will submit an equality and diversity policy acceptable to the Leaside Trust or agree to sign up to ours. They will also provide sufficient information for the Leaside Trust to fulfil the requirements of this Policy.

Selection for promotion will only be based on ability or demonstrated potential to do the job. All employees will be encouraged to take advantage of available, relevant and suitable training and development opportunities.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

We will not apply unjustifiable requirements regarding our terms of employment or working practices. Care will be taken to ensure that all policies and procedures do not include elements which will unfairly adversely impact on different groups of staff.

Working Environment

All efforts will be made to make adjustments wherever reasonably practicable for disabled staff, applicants for posts or any staff member making a reasonable request.

We aim to have a working environment and culture where everyone feels comfortable and treated with dignity and respect. (See our Mission Statement).

Challenging policy, practice and individuals

The Leaside Trust is committed to respectful ways of challenging and healthy conflict resolution. We actively encourage staff to respectfully challenge each other when they are feeling uncomfortable and expect them to challenge each other, policy and practice where they notice that this policy is being breached. We will provide information so that staff can access appropriate support to deal with equality and diversity issues, which they cannot resolve themselves.

Our services

The Leaside Trust is completely committed to equality of opportunity within the criteria for our services.

Access to services

We will make reasonable adjustments to services according to individual circumstances, wherever possible. We aim to ensure that no individual or group applying to use our services will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons for any reason that cannot be justified.

Access to information

Information will be made available in suitable formats, such as large print, Braille or recorded, where needed to meet a service users needs.

Monitoring

We have systems to collect and disseminate relevant monitoring information that will provide a profile of our applicants, staff, volunteers and secondees. Where possible, dependent on the type of project, we will monitor the people using our services. We will aim to monitor the following:

Age

Disability

Ethnicity

Sex

Sexual orientation

Procurement: Contractors, Consultants, Agents, and working with partners

The Leaside Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity for contractors, consultants and agents and will apply fair, open, and consistent criteria in the selection of contractors and consultants.

We will only seek to work with partners who share our commitment to equality and Diversity, see above. We will also work with other community organisations where possible to help us understand the issues of relevance to local communities and groups within those communities.

Complaints

We will ensure that anyone making a complaint due to any incident which occurs contrary to this Policy will have such complaints dealt with quickly and confidentially (see the Complaints Procedure).

We will ensure that individual employees who believe they have received treatment contrary to the principles of this Policy can have grievances dealt with quickly and confidentially under the Leaside Trust's Complaints Procedure.

Communication and consultation

This policy will be supplied to all new staff, volunteers, secondees and Trustees. During induction the policy will be signed off as having been read and understood. The policy will be made known to and available for current and prospective partners and others on request, it will also be available on our website.

We aim to ensure that those who will be affected by changes to policies, procedures and projects will be consulted about proposed changes to ensure the impact on any group is taken in to account; we will also ensure consideration for the impact on groups, as well as consultation, in developing new policies, procedures and projects.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Leaside Trust, partners and those who receive our services.

The policy will be updated according to legislative and good practice changes as and when needed.

Definition of Terms

Direct discrimination

Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Associative

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a particular protected characteristic.

Perceptive

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic or aspect of a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect

It can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or practice that appears to apply equally to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a particular aspect of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably, ie that it is ‘a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision you make in running your organisation, if the sole aim is to reduce costs is likely to be unlawful.

Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual” (see the Complaints Procedure).

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act or because they are suspected of having done so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Protected Characteristics

There are nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.