

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

April 2024



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Here at The Westway we aim to inspire, empower and be inclusive to all individuals of different backgrounds, cultures, perspectives and ways of being. We encourage all people, regardless of identity, to get involved in the Westway and make sure to platform their talents to the best of our ability. We recognise that being a diverse and inclusive space helps us fulfil our responsibility to be a Community and Wellbeing Centre that serves the local area to its best ability. We work within the spirit and practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture which is grounded in respect, dignity and actively challenging discrimination should it ever arise by having a zero-tolerance policy towards this. We will work to remove any unnecessary barriers for anybody seeking opportunities through volunteering, training and development, as well as using the centre. We will continue to support our leaders and managers to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in our everyday function.

## Equality and Diversity Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to set out The Westway's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Westway is committed to promoting EDI and promoting an environment that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds bring valuable insights to The Westway and enhance the way we deliver our service. The Westway aims to be an inclusive organisation to all, committed to providing equal opportunities to employees and volunteers, training and support and to proactively tackle and eliminate any discrimination.

## Equality and Diversity at The Westway:

At The Westway we consider equality to mean to actively break down barriers, eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities and accessibility for all.

At The Westway we consider diversity to mean we actively celebrate and champion our differences and value every person for their unique individuality of visible and non-visible differences.

We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not interchangeable but interdependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued, respected, and championed.

## **Scope:**

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, trustees, volunteers and everybody representing The Westway. Everybody has a personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of your involvement at The Westway you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with and to complete the declaration provided below. This policy is of relevance to all paid employees, trustees, volunteers and all concerned with the management and running of the organisation.

Any individual who disregards this policy and is seen to purposefully work against this policy risks being taken down a disciplinary route of action, or right to volunteer revoked. In these incidents decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

## **Working in line with The Equality Act 2010:**

Every individual representing The Westway is entitled to access an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. The Westway will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against any person representing, using or visiting The Westway Centre because of a protected characteristic as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics of The Equality Act 2010 are as follows:

- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Age

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated. All representatives of The Westway will be encouraged to develop their skills and awareness as well as to fulfil their potential and take advantage of any training, development and progression opportunities offered.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position. You may decide on the alternative to raise the matter through The Westway. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. The Westway will ensure that individuals who make allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However

false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedures.

At The Westway we like to go above and beyond, and The Westway holds the right to act against any discrimination that also fits outside the parameters of The Equality Act 2010. Any person seen to be actively trying to make another feel uncomfortable, or discriminating against because of any aspect of their individuality could be investigated for disregarding our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

This policy is directly for promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within The Westway Centre. The Westway Centre however holds the right to take disciplinary action or revoke a person's volunteering rights if they are seen to be making public statements of discrimination, or are investigated for breaking the Equality Act 2010 in any form.

### **The Westway's Commitment:**

- 1) Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- 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. A zero tolerance approach is taken towards any form of discrimination.
- 3) 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.
- 4) The Westway will 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) 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, customers, suppliers and the public.
- 6) Take serious complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
- 7) Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- 8) Further, The Westway retains the right to make formal reports to the police if any bullying, discrimination, or harassment is seen to be that of a criminal offence, such

as sexual harassment, any harassment that falls under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and any form of hate crime.

- 9) Decisions concerning staff will be based on merit. (Apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 10) The Westway will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to account for changes in the law.
- 11) The Westway will monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information in accordance with The Equality Act to encourage Equality Diversity and Inclusion and in meeting the aims set out in this policy.
- 12) 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.

## **Discipline Policy.**

A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under The Westway's Discipline and Grievance Policy. Representatives may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

## **When does this policy apply?**

This policy applies to all conduct within The Westway and also to conduct outside of The Westway which is related to your work or which may impact The Westway's reputation (e.g expression of views on social media). We have set out below some specific areas of application:

### **Recruitment Selection**

Recruitment Selection will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

### **Volunteer Selection**

Volunteers will be encouraged and empowered to join The Westway wherever possible to do so.

### **Training and Development**

You may also be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time to encourage the promotion of the principles found in this policy.

### **Employment:**

The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to The Westway employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by

unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups where possible.

### **The Westway's Legal Duties:**

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by The Westway to assess its effectiveness and may be amended from time to time. This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment, trusteeship or volunteering.

### **Advice and Support on Discrimination:**

Further advice and support is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission 0845 604 6610; Citizens Advice Bureau [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) and Community Legal Services Direct 0845 345 4345 [www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk).

### **Extent of Policy:**

The Westway seeks to apply this policy in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of all employees. The Westway offers a service in a fashion that compiles with the spirit of this policy.

This policy does not form a part of any employment contract with any employee and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied, collateral or express terms to any contract made with The Westway.

The organisation reserves the right to amend and update this policy at any time.