Darwen Asylum Refugee Enterprise

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1. DARE aims to be an anti-discriminatory organisation committed to the promotion of equality and diversity and, in line with the Equality Act 2010, the elimination of all forms of discrimination on grounds of any of the following 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- sex
- pregnancy and maternity
- race or ethnicity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief

1.2. DARE will also not discriminate on grounds not covered by the Act such as immigration status, socio-economic disadvantage and trades union activity, and will encourage compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998.

1.3. DARE will endeavour to establish a broad base for consultation amongst staff, members, volunteers and trustees, to identify priorities and needs in developing its anti-discriminatory policies, strategies and practice.

1.4. DARE will regularly monitor and review the composition of its trustees, staff, volunteers, membership and service users with an aim to encourage broad base representation, and will take positive action to address the under-representation of any groups.

1.5. DARE is keen to promote awareness of equality and diversity issues amongst its staff, volunteers and members, and to encourage them to operate within an anti-discriminatory framework and to challenge stereotyping and oppression.

1.6. DARE will work hard to foster good relations between groups from different backgrounds and protected characteristics, which is a requirement for statutory organisations in the Equality Act. We will encourage opportunities for social and economic interaction between refugees and asylum seekers and other local people and will try to counteract myths and misinformation. We will aim to protect our members from hate crime, stereotyping and intimidation

1.7. DARE will promote inclusion in all aspects of its work to ensure that all members, staff, volunteers and trustees from all backgrounds and abilities feel they have a role and a voice in the organisation.

Agreed at Board of Trustees – …..

This policy applies to all aspects of DARE's work, services and policies, and to its entire staff, volunteers, members and trustees, and to all providers contracted by DARE.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT WORK AND PROCEDURES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

2.1 The objectives of this part of the policy are to:

- Ensure that the DARE has access to the widest labour market and secures the best employees and volunteers for its needs.

- Ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the DARE and themselves.
- Ensure that positive action is taken wherever possible to diversify the workforce and to encourage the employment of refugees
- Achieve an ability-based workforce that is in line with the community served by DARE.

The cooperation of all employees and volunteers is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives, and for ensuring compliance with the relevant Acts of Parliament as well as the various Codes of Practice, lies with the Board of Trustees of DARE. Behaviour or actions against the spirit and/or the letter of the laws on which this policy is based will be considered serious disciplinary matters.

2.2. Responsibility and Monitoring

Day to day responsibility for this policy will rest with DARE Manager. The Manager will produce an annual report to Trustees on the diversity profile of the workforce, members and applicants, and a progress report on diversity initiatives and their outcomes. DARE is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and will bring it to the attention of all workers.

2.3. The Role of Employees and Volunteers

All DARE employees and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure the policy is put into practice and to:

- Understand the value and benefit of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Attend relevant DARE training courses
- Familiarise themselves with the policy
- Draw to the attention of the Manager or trustees any instance of perceived, discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, or any perceived problem in relation to DARE's working practices in relation to diversity
- Promote the inclusion of members from the widest range of backgrounds in all of its activities

- Promote good relations between groups with different backgrounds or protected characteristics
- Work in a way which demonstrates commitment to diversity.

  It is expected that all workers will commit to acting as ambassadors for DARE in this respect.

Agreed at Board of Trustees – …..

2.4. Role of managers

Managers have a particular responsibility to:

- Ensure the policy is implemented in the management of staff and volunteers
- Encourage staff , volunteers and members to learn more about equality, diversity and inclusion
- Promote a positive, professional work environment in relation to the policy by challenging behaviour, actions or decisions which breach the policy
- Act as a role model for others and develop personal skills in order to handle issues relating to dignity at work

2.5. Recruitment and Selection

DARE's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in the policies and procedures for recruiting staff, volunteers and trustees.

2.6. Representation targets

In the light of the programme of work, DARE aims to achieve a ratio of 50% volunteers, staff and membership of Board of Trustees having refugee background. Timetabled targets will be set for groups identified as being under-represented. Where necessary, positive action, as permitted by the Equality Act, will be taken to help under-represented groups to compete for jobs and volunteering opportunities on a genuine basis of equality.

2.7. Positive action - training, promotion and conditions of service

Under-represented groups will be encouraged to apply for training and employment and volunteering opportunities with DARE. Wherever possible, special training will be provided for such groups to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion. Actual recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit.

Wherever necessary, use will be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably qualified people to cater for the particular needs of specific groups.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the particular needs of disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups.

2.8. Personnel records

In order to ensure the effective operation of this policy and DARE's recruitment policies (and for no other purpose) a confidential record will be kept of all employees', trustees' and job applicants' protected characteristics in line with Data Protection law principles.

Where necessary, employees and trustees will be able to check/correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted. Such records will be analysed regularly and appropriate follow-up action taken. Disposal of personnel records in accordance with our Recruitment Policy and Procedure will be in a secure and confidential manner.

Agreed at Board of Trustees – …..

2.9. Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation

DARE has a 'duty of care' for employees and volunteers, and so will promote a safe, healthy and fair environment. Everyone has the right to work in an environment free from bullying, prejudice, harassment and victimisation. Any employee or volunteer who feels that they have been bullied, harassed or treated unequally should initially raise this with their manager or the Manager for an informal resolution, but may also use the grievance procedure and the issue will be taken seriously and investigated.

Harassment is illegal and is defined in the Equality Act as '"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". It can be intentional or unintentional, it can be one act or a series of acts, or could be related to omission to act e.g. allowing someone to be excluded from activities. It can include behaviour that individuals find offensive even if it's not directed at them, and even if they do not have the relevant protected characteristics themselves.

Bullying is not illegal, but may well constitute a breach of this policy. It may be face to face, by letter, email or social media and will usually happen on more than one occasion. Bullying usually involves a power differential and may include physical assault, gestures, name calling, unfair treatment, undermining or singling out someone, denying training or promotion opportunities, being ostracised etc.

Victimisation refers to bad treatment directed towards someone who has made, or is believed to have made, or supported a complaint under the Equality Act. It includes situations where a complaint has not yet been made but someone is victimised because it is suspected they might make one. If an individual gives false evidence or makes an allegation in bad faith, then they are not protected from victimisation under the Act.

Staff found to have bullied, harassed or victimised an employee or volunteer will be dealt with through the disciplinary process.

2.10. Challenges / complaints under this policy

All staff and volunteers should be treated with dignity and respect at work and trustees, and visitors should also feel they are included and treated respectfully. All individuals should feel able to challenge issues around equality, diversity and inclusion through this policy, informally or using the appropriate grievance or complaints procedure.

Agreed at Board of Trustees – …..

3. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN RELATION TO SERVICE PROVISION

3.1. DARE is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in all the services which it provides to service users.

DARE aims to ensure access to appropriate services by all service users of the asylum and refugee community in Blackburn with Darwen Borough, regardless of any of the protected characteristics listed in the first paragraph or of employment status, health status, political persuasion, or immigration status.

In order to achieve this aim, DARE uses guidelines based on the following principles:

- Equal access and communication
- Providing a welcoming environment
- Providing a physically accessible environment
- Use of appropriate language
- Avoiding jargon
- Distributing information about services as widely as possible within the asylum and refugee community
- Holding meetings/activities at times and in places which enable people to attend. Identifying other factors which might limit access to particular groups, e.g. women
- Developing links with other agencies/service providers in order to offer access a greater diversity of services
- Use of flexible working practices, e.g. rotas, flexible working hours.

3.2. Working methods within DARE

- Ensuring clarity about DARE's aims and objectives, what services can be offered by whom, and what the boundaries are
- Ensuring management structures are responsive and accessible
- Offering a variety of ways of being genuinely involved in DARE's work, e.g. surveys, working groups, consultation meetings, residents' meetings, training and skills sharing
- Enabling staff to respond positively to change and new developments through support and training
- Working closely with other agencies in order to keep in touch with and to

contribute to new developments in working practice and policy

- Ensuring staff and volunteers and trustees have access to appropriate training

  to enable them to put the policy into practice for example:

  Combating discrimination

  - Raising awareness of discrimination and discriminatory practices
  - Challenging discriminatory comments or behaviour
  - Ensuring that DARE does not collude with discriminatory practices of other agencies, groups or individuals

Agreed at Board of Trustees – …..

3.3. Responding to abuse and harassment

- Providing direct support and initiating action where appropriate
- Publicising information about other agencies/services offering advice and support
- Respecting confidentiality
- Challenging structural inequality
- Raising the awareness of local and national policy makers
- Campaigning (in partnership with other agencies)
- Advocacy

3.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Ensuring there are systems for consultation, monitoring and review of services through:

- Review and planning/evaluation process
- Team meetings
- Feedback from individuals, community groups and other agencies, e.g. through questionnaires, consultation meetings

- Specific consultation with members from particular groups if required e.g. women, disabled people

4. ROLE OF DARE'S BOARD of TRUSTEES

The Board will:

- Monitor the implementation of the Policy and review it every 2 years
- Receive and discuss the annual report with information and statistics
- Ensure that staff and volunteers and trustees are aware of the policy and trained in equality diversity and inclusion
- Regularly review other policies and procedures (e.g. recruitment and selection) in the light of equality legislation and good practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Agreed at Board of Trustees –