



Equal Opportunities and  
Diversity Policy



## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

This Equal Opportunities Policy reflects both the Aims and Purposes of The Lighthouse Charity and the spirit and intentions of legislation which outlaws discrimination, including the following key legislative documents:

- Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2000

The Lighthouse Charity seeks to provide services fairly and equitably, considering all users' needs. No person requiring services from The Lighthouse Charity will be treated less favourably than any other person based on race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, education status or religion.

However, our governing documents allow where there is a genuine occupational reason for a specific post, we may require the post holder to be a practising Christian. All staff must understand and express sympathy with the Christian ethos of The Lighthouse Charity and do nothing that would be seen to undermine it.

### **Access for People with Disabilities**

The Lighthouse Charity is mindful of the special needs of those with impaired mobility, hearing or sight, those on low incomes, children and young people, and parents of babies and children. It encourages input from all who wish to use or participate in its initiatives and have particular needs. The Lighthouse Charity will make every reasonable effort to meet those needs, without which some people would be excluded from benefitting from what it offers.

As an employer, The Lighthouse Charity is committed to equality of opportunity. Entry into employment/volunteering and promotion or change of post within The Lighthouse Charity is determined solely based on personal merit and ability relevant to the Aims and Purposes of The Lighthouse Charity.

All the Aims and Purposes of The Lighthouse Charity are underpinned by the distinctiveness of the Christian faith. As a result, all staff in posts central to fulfilling the Aims and Purposes must demonstrate a clear and personal commitment to the Christian faith (see the Evangelical Alliance basis of faith).

In light of our Christian purpose and ethos, we reserve the right to recruit Christians where there is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) to do so (as outlined in the appropriate legislation).

### **Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers**

As part of the recruitment procedures:

- The Lighthouse Charity will ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- The Lighthouse Charity will consider, seek and use the most effective ways of bringing job vacancies to the attention of persons who may otherwise be disadvantaged.
- All job applicants and employees will be asked to complete a form denoting their gender, race and any disabilities. The Lighthouse Charity undertakes that this form will not be made available to anyone involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and is to monitor the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy only.
- The Lighthouse Charity will always welcome appropriate individuals from minority groups among its directors, employees and volunteers.
- A copy of this Equal Opportunities Policy will be made available to each employee, and a copy will also be given to each job applicant.

Training on equal opportunities issues will be provided to every new member of staff and volunteer. Periodic refresher sessions will be undertaken by all involved in the work of The Lighthouse Charity.

The Trustees, in consultation with employees, volunteers and service users, will keep under regular review the procedures intended to provide equality of opportunity and make any necessary changes accordingly. This Equal Opportunities policy will be formally reviewed regularly.

### **Responsibilities of Volunteers and Paid Workers**

All volunteers and paid workers should understand, accept and adhere to this policy.

Every individual, both staff and volunteer, must eliminate discrimination by ensuring the practical application of the Equal Opportunities Policy and reporting incidents of discrimination to an appropriate senior staff member.

Any action contravening this policy should be reported to the Trustees of The Lighthouse Charity, who will take any necessary action and may invoke the complaints or grievance procedures.

## **DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION**

### **Types of discrimination**

"*Direct discrimination*" refers to treating anyone differently and worse than someone else for certain reasons.

"*Indirect discrimination*" refers to a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others.

"*Harassment*" is any behaviour towards another which is not wanted, for whatever reason, and might cause an environment of conflict.

"*Victimisation*" is treating anyone less favourably who has exercised a right under any policy

### **Complaints of discrimination:**

Where staff or volunteers consider that they have been subject to discrimination and seek redress, they should pursue the matter through The Lighthouse Charity Grievance Procedure.

Where the complainant is a service user, the matter should be dealt with under The Lighthouse Charity Complaints Procedure.

Complaints by staff about service users should be raised through the Grievance Procedure.

Where a complaint is formally upheld, information gathered by the investigation will be used should the need for a subsequent disciplinary hearing be identified.

### **Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of the Trustees of The Lighthouse Charity to ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy and its implementation are appropriately monitored. The monitoring of equal opportunities practices will be carried out to measure the effectiveness of the policy, to check that it is working, and act as a basis for future plans.

The monitoring results will be reviewed regularly, and any necessary adjustments will be made to ensure the effectiveness of the policy. The results of monitoring this policy will be discussed with employees, volunteers and service users, and adjustments will be

made where necessary after such consultation. Amendments may also be required to reflect legislative changes.

The Lighthouse Charity will ensure that all information collated and analysed relating to this policy is collated only for equal opportunities monitoring and that such information will be protected from misuse under the Data Protection Act.