

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy aims to outline New Mills & District Volunteer Centre's (NMVC) commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for staff, workers, volunteers, trustees, and clients in terms of employment and access to services; and to provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice. It will also outline NMVC's commitment to providing information that is understandable and accessible to all.

2. Scope

2.1 The policy applies to employees directly employed by NMVC, to workers employed via agencies, visitors to NMVC's office, contractors in terms of employment, trustees, volunteers and clients in terms of service provision. The policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equalities Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or cultural beliefs
- Gender reassignment
- Marital status and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

2.2 This generic policy applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to Discipline, Grievance, Harassment and Complaints.

3. General purpose

3.1 New Mills & District Volunteers Centre's practices will ensure that clients, staff, volunteers and trustees will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, race, sex, religion or cultural beliefs, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity.

3.2 NMVC's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

- 3.21 Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic.
- 3.22 Indirect discrimination – when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- 3.23 Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.

- 3.24 Perceptive discrimination - direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
 - 3.25 Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
 - 3.26 Third party harassment – potential liability for the harassment of staff by others such as clients.
 - 3.27 Victimization – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or it is thought that they have done so.
- 3.4 NMVC is also committed to meeting the communication needs of any sensory impaired or disabled person are as set out below:
- 3.41 Ask people if they have any information or communication needs and find out how to meet their needs.
 - 3.42 Record those needs in a set way.
 - 3.43 Highlight a person’s file (HR File for employees, Charitylog for clients, or Charitylog for Volunteers), so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and explain clearly how these will be met.
 - 3.44 Share information about a person’s needs with other appropriate providers, when they have consent or permission to do so.
 - 3.45 Act to make sure that people get information in an accessible way and provide communication support if they need it.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 NMVC values its clients, staff, volunteers and trustees, and expects them to be treated in a respectful manner regardless of protected characteristics or disability. Accordingly, all have a responsibility to treat others in the same way regarding equality and diversity issues.

5. Aims

- 5.1 Equality of Opportunity is one of NMVC’s core values, we aim to:

- 5.11 Promote equality of opportunity for all clients and volunteers,
- 5.12 Celebrate and value diversity,
- 5.13 Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination,
- 5.14 Meet the communication needs of all clients and volunteers,
- 5.15 Ensure that people receive information in accessible formats.

- 5.2 NMVC will provide equality of opportunity as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised. We will support our staff, workers, trustees, volunteers and contractors in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from colleagues, other organisations or clients.

6. The Standard in Practice

- 6.1 All service enquiries to NMVC will be recorded on a standard data capture form by the relevant member of staff to establish whether the client or volunteer has any communication or information needs.
- 6.2 If communication or information needs are identified, they will be recorded on the relevant database as described above.
- 6.3 Use appropriate and agreed communication methods to ensure the client or volunteer can access relevant information. The methods may include:
- a. Email
 - b. Text message
 - c. Audio
 - d. Easy read or large print
 - e. Assisting in arranging support from a communication professional.
- 6.4 Utilise electronic flags on the relevant database which will ensure other staff members are aware of the agreed communication methods for the particular client or volunteer.
- 6.5 Regularly review communication needs identification, processing and monitoring to ensure client or volunteer needs are still being met.
- 6.6 Other methods may include utilising closed captions on videos, image descriptions on Social Media and providing materials as required specifically for those who are sight impaired.

7. The Policy in Practice – New Mills & District Volunteer Centre as an Employer

NMVC aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in the context of the policy. Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy. All training opportunities will be published widely to all appropriate employees and not in such a way so as to exclude particular groups. NMVC regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of clients, staff, volunteers and trustees in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

8. The Policy in Practice – New Mills & District Volunteer Centre as a Service Provider

In developing its products and services NMVC will seek to ensure access to all clients and volunteers, and potential clients and volunteers. This will include, wherever practicable, making specific access arrangements for its clients and volunteers with disabilities or learning difficulties, or any other protected characteristic which may apply, such as religion and belief. NMVC will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.



9. Evaluation and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Centre Manager and the Board of Trustees on an ongoing basis and amended in line with new developments in Equality and Diversity best practice.