

Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre (BHCAC)
Equalities Policy

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre and its employees and volunteers to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre to ensure that no employee, volunteer, member, beneficiary or client or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics).
- 1.2 Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
- 1.3 We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.
- 1.4 All employees and volunteers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, recruitment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 1.5 Our staff and volunteers will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass members, beneficiaries or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre 's goods and services.
- 1.6 This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre, Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

2. OUR COMMITMENT

- 2.1 To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and volunteers are recognised and valued.
- 2.2 Every employee and volunteer is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- 2.3 Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff and volunteers.
- 2.4 To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

2.5 We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

2.6 Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

2.7 This policy is fully supported by the trustees and has been agreed with employee and volunteer representatives.

2.8 The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Employment procedures and practices will be undertaken strictly in accordance with the following and all other relevant legislation:

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975-85
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010

3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES/MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Trustees/manager/supervisors will ensure that they and their staff and volunteers operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The manager/supervisors will ensure that:

3.3 all their staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;

3.4 grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible; proper records are maintained.

The trustees will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees/ volunteers and job applicants, including periodic departmental audits.

3.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and volunteers and the attitudes of staff and volunteers are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

3.4 comply with the policy and arrangements;

3.5 not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;

3.6 not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff/ volunteers or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics,

3.7 ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic,

3.8 inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice,

4. THIRD PARTIES

Third-party harassment occurs where Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre's employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre will not tolerate such actions against its staff and volunteers, and the employee concerned should inform their manager/supervisor at once that this has occurred. Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

5. RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

6. RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, manager/supervisors are required to:

6.1 make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee and volunteer who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: manager/supervisors are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);

6.2 include disabled people in training/development programmes;

6.3 give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

7. EQUALITY TRAINING

7.1 A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes.

7.2 will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

8. MONITORING

8.1 The Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.

- 8.2 The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees/ volunteers by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.
- 8.3 There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- 8.4 We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance.
- 8.5 Where appropriate equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre policies and our services / products may have on those who experience them.
- 8.6 The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- 8.7 If monitoring shows that the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

9. GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE

- 9.1 Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the BHCAC's Grievance Procedure.
- 9.2 Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the BHCAC's Disciplinary Procedure.

10. SERVICE DELIVERY

- 10.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre's commitment
Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre is committed to ensuring equality of access to all its services. The Trustees will take action to provide genuine equality of opportunity to counter past discrimination and to monitor the outcome. The Trustees will aim to ensure that no sector of the community shall be denied access or receive a poor service on the grounds of age, disability, gender/ gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).
- 10.2 The Trustees will aim to ensure that all its services will be provided in line with this anti-discrimination policy. In order to promote equality of access the executive will aim to ensure the following:

- 10.3 that services are based on consultation with those who receive the services and positive steps are taken to include excluded groups in decision making,
- 10.4 that all services are flexible and responsive to the changing needs in the community,
- 10.5 that information on services is widely available and where necessary targeted to ensure maximum awareness of provisions,
- 10.6 that systems are developed to audit and monitor service delivery and consumer satisfaction,
- 10.7 that an accessible complaints procedure will be developed to ensure against discrimination in service allocation and delivery,
- 10.8 that positive action programmes will be developed to target the needs usually excluded groups,
- 10.9 that in advertising and publicity Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre will be presented as an organisation committed to promoting equality of access to employment and services.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre will take the following measures to ensure the service provision meets the above commitment:

- Display the statement of intent in the reception area, meeting room, offices and therapy room.
- Display a conduct statement in public areas. All volunteers and staff will be made aware of the conduct statement and will inform the Project Manager of any breach of the statement. It will be the responsibility of the Project Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Trustees to make a decision on the withdrawal of service. The service user involved will be advised of the reason for the withdrawal of service and their right to make a complaint under the complaints policy.
- Publicise the service with an aim to reach the community that it serves.
- Carry out user satisfaction surveys at regular intervals, analyse the results and take any appropriate action as indicated.
- Provide interpreting over the phone where necessary.
- Obtain and provide literature in community languages, large print, Braille and on tape where available.
- Provide home or hospital visits where clients are unable to travel to the Centre.
- Review the accessibility of the Centre at regular intervals.
- Display the Centre's complaints procedure and encourage clients to comment on the services.
- Include information on the complaints policy and Equal Opportunities Statement of intent in when publicising services.
- Monitor the take up of service on a regular basis.
- Maintain a directory of referral agencies and their access details.

11. REVIEW

Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre will monitor and review the effectiveness of this equal opportunities policy on an annual basis.

12. INFORMATION

This document shall be circulated to all Trustees/Employees/Volunteers and job applicant.