

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy statement

Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for a variety of characteristics identified as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

CRCC aims to be an employer and service provider that actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from direct and associative discrimination and we make every effort to relate to all people in a respectful and equal manner in the belief that all individuals should be treated on the basis of individual merit and without prejudice.

All employees, volunteers and trustees must uphold and support this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (EDI).

Purpose

CRCC's values are founded on gender equality, human rights and anti-discrimination. Women as a group have traditionally faced specific barriers or discrimination in realising their basic human rights and CRCC believe in the importance of gender-specific approaches delivered by independent specialist services that are women-centered, needs-led, strengths-based and trauma-informed.

Our focus is on preventing all forms of violence and discrimination against women and children and actively working against the oppression and disadvantages they are subjected to.

CRCC will strive to do the following in its treatment of current or potential users of CRCC services, agencies or community members:

- Eliminate discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations between groups;
- Protect and promote human rights in service provision;
- Encourage equality, diversity, inclusion and dignity;
- Aim to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences;
- Encourage individuals to develop and maximise their potential.

Substantive equality

CRCC recognises the importance of striving for substantive equality, which is a principle that refers to the achievement of true equality in outcomes. It is achieved through equal access, equal opportunity and, most importantly, the provision of services and benefits in a manner and according to standards that meet any unique needs and circumstances, such as cultural, social, economic and historical disadvantage.

Substantive equality is both a process and an end goal relating to outcomes that seeks to acknowledge and overcome the barriers that have led to the inequality in the first place.

When substantive equality in outcomes does not exist, inequality remains.

Protected characteristics

The following grounds are defined as protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination, either directly or indirectly, against anyone on the basis of any of these characteristics, unless objectively justified, is not permitted by law:

- **Age** – whether by reference to a particular age or to a range of ages.
- **Disability** – if a person has a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **Race** – race includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
- **Gender reassignment** – if a Trans person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.
- **Marriage and civil partnership** – if somebody is married or is a civil partner.
- **Religion or belief** – if somebody possesses any religion or lack of religion, any religious or philosophical belief including a lack of belief.
- **Sex** – a person being male or female.
- **Sexual orientation** – a person’s sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex, or persons of either sex.
- **Pregnancy & Maternity** – if a woman is pregnant, and/or on maternity leave.

CRCC is committed to:

- making sure our services meet the diverse needs of all existing and potential service users;
- full support of this policy by all CRCC workers, volunteers and trustees;
- monitoring and reviewing this policy regularly;
- having clear procedures that enable our workers and service users to make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Women-only spaces

The Equality Act 2010 recognises that some groups (e.g. women) are disadvantaged in some areas of life as a consequence of past or current discrimination and exclusion. The Act enables CRCC to take steps to help women overcome disadvantage and meet needs that are different from the needs of other groups whilst increasing participation.

Women-only (and girl-only) services are legal and appropriate, where it can be shown to be the most effective way of providing those services, or where the service is needed by one sex only. Women need access to safe, separate and non-judgmental services. CRCC provides values and protects safe, accessible women-only spaces for women and girl service users.

This includes those women and girls who are trans and non-binary AFAB (Assigned Female At Birth) individuals and those who have experienced oppression as a woman, and who feel comfortable receiving support from a service that is run by women for women.

Ensuring accessibility

In order to make service accessible to all women and children, CRCC will:

- provide and promote support in flexible confidential spaces and, in effort to address concerns about confidentiality, offer other forms of support that are not face to face;

- ensure due care and regard are given to EDI in the development of all new service specifications;
- ensure effective service user consultation and work to co-produce all new service specifications; collect and share countywide equalities data so as an organization, we can identify the women and girls we are less accessible to and plan services to meet unaddressed need;
- ensure strategic and business plans include the allocation of funds/fundraising activity to develop services so they are accessible to the diversity of survivors. Examples of which include: targeted outreach support, travel budgets, costing workers travel time, interpretation and/or translation, new publicity material depicting same sex couples and the rainbow flag or advertising disabled accessible spaces.

CRCC as an employer

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no CRCC worker receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and/or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All CRCC workers are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored, and policies and practices are amended if necessary, to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

All CRCC workers whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All workers 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 CRCC.

CRCC is committed to:

- ensuring every worker is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all;
- a zero-tolerance policy of intimidation, bullying or harassment;
- appointing, training, developing, rewarding and promoting on the basis of merit and ability;
- reviewing all employment practices and procedures to ensure clarity and fairness;
- monitoring and reviewing this policy regularly;
- ensuring all workers attend training on equality and diversity and inclusion;
- carrying out an anonymized worker survey to analyse the organisation's inclusivity for different groups;
- periodically cross-referencing workers equalities data with aspects of work such as seniority and longevity of service to help identify organisational discriminatory practice;
- having clear procedures for raising a grievance if applicants and workers feel they have been unfairly treated, ensuring workers will not be victimised in any way for making such a complaint in good faith and dealing with complaints of this nature seriously, in confidence and as soon as possible;
- taking disciplinary action against workers found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination;
- treating serious breaches of this policy/incidents of harassment as gross misconduct and considering any allegations of discrimination that are not made in good faith to be a disciplinary matter.

Responsibilities

Whilst specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors and those involved in the recruitment, selection, promotion and training of workers, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect.

The personal commitment of every worker to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the organisation. This extends to the treatment of job applicants, workers (including former workers), visitors, service users, partner agencies and suppliers.

Recruitment and selection

The following principles will apply whenever recruitment or selection for positions takes place:

- Individuals will be assessed according to their personal capability to carry out a given job.
- 'Understanding of intersectionality and a commitment to equality and anti-oppressive practice' will be included in the essential person specification for all roles and interviews will include a question on this.
- Assumptions that only certain types of person can perform certain types of work will not be made.
- Any qualifications or requirements applied to a job that have or may have the effect of inhibiting applications from certain types of person will only be retained if they can be justified in terms of the job to be done.
- Any age limits applied to a job will only be retained if they can be justified in terms of the job to be done.
- Recruitment solely or primarily by word of mouth will be avoided if its effect is or may be to prevent certain types of person from applying.
- Selection tests will be specifically related to job requirements and measure the person's actual or inherent ability to do or train for the work.
- Selection tests will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.
- Applications from different types of person will be processed in the same way.
- Written records of interviews and reasons for appointment and non-appointment will be kept in line with data protection best practice.
- Questions will relate to the requirements of the job, if it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances may affect job performance, this will be done objectively without questions or assumptions being made that are based on stereotyped beliefs about certain types of person.
- If CRCC's arrangements for recruitment and selection put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage due to a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements will be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage.
- A person who has not read and understood this policy should make no decisions regarding recruitment or selection.
- Efforts will be made to carry out targeted recruitment to address underrepresentation in all areas of the workforce; this can be through advertising via partner agencies or support networks or specific regional newsletters inviting members of other organisations to sit on interview panels.
- We will prevent discrimination against our workers regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

Promotion, transfer and training

The following principles will apply to appointments for promotion, transfer and training:

- Assessment criteria and appraisal schemes will be carefully examined to ensure they are not discriminatory.
- Assessment criteria and appraisal schemes will be monitored and, if such criteria or schemes result in one group of workers predominantly gaining access to promotion, transfer or training, they will be checked to make sure this is not due to any hidden or indirect discrimination.
- Promotion and career development patterns will be monitored to ensure access to promotion and career development opportunities in particular groups of workers are not being excluded unreasonably.
- Traditional qualifications and requirements for promotion, transfer and training (such as length of service and age) that may discriminate against certain groups of workers will be reviewed and only continue to be applied if it is genuinely reasonable to do so in the circumstances.
- Policies and practices on selection for training, day release and personal development should not result in an imbalance in training between groups of workers, unless this is reasonable in all the circumstances.
- If CRCC's arrangements relating to promotion, transfer or training put disabled workers at a substantial disadvantage for a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements will be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

The following principles apply to terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services:

- The terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services available to workers will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are provided in a way that is free from unlawful discrimination.
- Part-time workers will receive pay, benefits, facilities and services on a pro rata basis to their full-time comparator, unless otherwise objectively justified.
- If CRCC's arrangements relating to terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services put disabled workers at a substantial disadvantage due to a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements will be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage.
- Pay and bonus criteria, policies and arrangements will be carefully examined and monitored and, if it appears that any group of workers are disadvantaged, they will be checked to make sure that this is not due to any hidden or indirect discrimination.
- Details about the terms of employment for a worker who wishes to undergo, who is undergoing or has undergone a gender reassignment process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex are documented in the Trans Inclusion Policy.

Grievances, disciplinary procedures, dismissals and redundancies

Workers who bring a grievance in good faith (or assist another to do so), either under this policy or otherwise in relation to an equal opportunities matter, will not be disciplined, dismissed or otherwise victimised for having done so.

No member of a particular group of workers will be disciplined or dismissed for performance or behaviour that would be overlooked or condoned in another group, unless there is genuine and lawful justification for this.

Redundancy criteria and procedures will be carefully examined to ensure that they do not operate in an unlawfully discriminatory manner.

Any voluntary redundancy benefits will be equally available to all workers concerned, unless there is a genuine and lawful justification for doing otherwise.

Harassment

Harassment takes many forms, occurs on a variety of different grounds and can be directed at one person or many people. An essential characteristic is that it is unwanted by the recipient and that the recipient finds the conduct offensive or unacceptable.

Harassment need not be directed at the complainant and can occur if the complainant witnesses another person being harassed. Conduct usually becomes harassment if it continues once it has been made clear that the recipient regards it as offensive, although a single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently serious.

It is the unwanted nature of the conduct that distinguishes harassment from friendly behaviour, which is welcome and mutual.

Harassment can be based on:

- perceived or actual race, sex, colour, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, age or disability
- power or hierarchy
- willingness to challenge harassment (leading to victimisation)
- membership, or non-membership, of a trade union
- possible links to AIDS/HIV
- status as an ex-offender
- health
- physical characteristics

While not an exhaustive list, forms of harassment include:

- physical contact
- jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, offensive or sectarian songs and letters
- posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, emblems, flags
- offensive email, screen savers etc.
- isolation or non-co-operation and exclusion
- coercion for sexual favours
- pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking

Harassment is unlawful in many cases and individuals may be held legally liable for their actions.

Complaints of harassment will be dealt in accordance with the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.