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Gender & Equal Opportunities Policy September 2021-August 2022

AIM:	To provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing Gender Equality
NAMED STAFF/PERSONNEL WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead – Steve Egan• Deputies – Anita McGreevy & Laura Webster• Nominated Trustee – Paul Wallace
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APPROVED BY:	Bill Adams – Chair of Trustees

Gender & Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out CWP commitment to Equal Opportunities.

Creativity Works Preston is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce and in our delivery of education and training, eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Our aim is for our workforce, volunteers and trainees to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each person to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all our staff, volunteers and service users.
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity
- create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination

- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, students, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's activities

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

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Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence

The policy is included in the Staff Handbook and is a condition of employment for all staff. Copies of the document are also available from the CEO. CWP will ensure that all members of our staff have seen and understood the policy

Harassment and Bullying

CWP's equal opportunities policy defines **Harassment as:**

"...unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of all people in the workplace. It may be related to sex, race, colour, disability, sexual orientation, age or any other personal characteristic that is unwanted by the recipient.

Harassment, deliberate or otherwise, can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, which is found to be offensive, objectionable, upsetting or embarrassing to the recipient, and which might threaten an employee's job security or create a stressful or intimidating work environment."

And bullying as:

"...persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, degenerate or injure the recipient, or unfair penal sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines self-confidence and may cause suffering and stress."

As a guide, examples of what is unacceptable behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours, unwelcome remarks or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them, shouting at them, or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion, coercion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

CWP regards any form of harassment or bullying as totally unacceptable and as a matter to be seriously and immediately addressed. The normal expectation is that staff who believe they are being harassed would raise their concerns with their manager or use the grievance procedure

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Complaints

If a member of staff, volunteer or trainee raises a matter in connection with the policy the manager must first ascertain whether the matter is a formal complaint or merely a comment on how the policy works.

If it is a formal complaint, the manager must inform immediately the person responsible for HR in the organisation of the substance of the complaint and the proposed action.

If the matter is a comment or suggestion regarding the working of the policy, rather than a complaint, the person dealing with the issue should pass the comment on to the person responsible for HR within CWP who will share it with Senior Management and Trustees.

Equal Opportunity Policy and Recruitment

The preparation of job descriptions and person specifications must take into account CWP's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Job descriptions and person specifications must reflect the job and must not imply sex or other stereotyping.

Requirements as to length of service, age, physical characteristics, mobility, or other qualifications which could be in breach of CWP's Equal Opportunities Policy may be included only if they are necessary for the proper performance of the job.

Apart from a description of the main duties of the post-holder a job description should include: the title of the post, whether it is full or part time, the salary, to whom the post is accountable and for whom the post is accountable, if anyone.

All job descriptions should end with a clause along the lines of 'and any other duties reasonably required by their manager'.

The job description will include a person specification. When asking for experience, skills and knowledge the questions and requirements should be clear. For example, rather than saying that the candidate requires experience of working in an office, the description should say that the candidate must have proven administration skills including filing, word-processing and diary management, or whatever is appropriate. All essential skills required must be demonstrated through the assessment process – if it's not essential then mark it as desirable.

Equal opportunity in Service Delivery

CWP believes that every individual has something to give to their community and that everyone should be given the opportunity to become actively involved in their environment, and that such active involvement by all members of the community is to be desired. CWP operates on the basis of no rejection policy for students and volunteers. This is intended to promote diversity and to encourage participation in training and volunteering by all, regardless of their background and abilities.

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CWP is committed to promoting diversity and ensuring that no service user is disadvantaged by virtue of negative attitudes towards their gender, marital and parental status, religious or political beliefs, colour, race, ethnic origins, creed, sexual orientation, age, disability, spent criminal convictions or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

This policy covers all CWP's service users who are mainly volunteers and students. CWP's equal opportunities policy in staff employment is outlined in a separate policy document which should be read in junction with this policy.

This policy gives broad guidance on how to achieve CWP's commitment in service delivery.

Access and targeting

We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual students, or groups of students. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our students and volunteers. We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different groups of students by making our projects flexible and tailored to individual needs of each student.

CWP will take positive steps to redress imbalances among our service users. This includes consideration of how and where our opportunities should be promoted.

CWP will do everything reasonably practical, including outreach work and working with our funders and community partners, to make volunteering and training opportunities available to everyone.

CWP will develop projects which explicitly welcome participants from excluded and disadvantaged groups, including students who:

- have learning, physical, communication, sensory and/or medical needs;
- have or experience behavioural, emotional and social needs;
- reflect social and cultural diversity;
- have attendance difficulties;
- experience significant ill health;
- have relatives to care for;
- have children of their own or are expecting children;
- use English as a second language;
- have residency in this country or may be refugees or asylum seekers;
- have a mobile life style as travellers;
- are children and young people in care;
- live in poverty or who may be homeless;
- are gifted and talented;
- bully or who are victims of bullying;
- are bereaved;
- are traumatized;

Additional support will be available to students who may require more help with their learning. All special and additional needs will be considered in each student's learning plan and implementation.

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We will reinforce our commitment to diversity and equality in all of our marketing and press efforts. We will use language which is inclusive. We will ensure that our promotional material stresses previous positive achievements of volunteers and learners among the excluded groups.

We will provide information in accessible formats, (for instance Braille, large-letter print or on audio tape) on request, and will do whatever else is reasonable to facilitate entry to our provision for people with a disability.

We will make our premises welcoming and easily accessible, meeting legislative requirements within the constraints of available resources. We will provide information on access, on request, at all times, as part of any document asking people to come to our buildings.

Recruitment of volunteers and students

We will encourage and support recruitment from groups that are under-represented in our projects by using targeting techniques as well as links with partners and other sources of funding to provide access for minority groups.

We will ensure that volunteers' specifications reflect only relevant requirements for each role and will not incorporate any discriminatory elements or stereotyping.

Awareness of specific needs

We will make efforts to be aware of and responsive to specific needs of our service users and we will respect their cultural/religious/personal requirements.

Where food provision is an essential element of the service, we will have arrangements in place to ensure that the dietary requirements of service users are met.

Disciplinary and grievance procedures

A complaints and grievance procedure for students and volunteers will be given to them during their induction. Any student or volunteer who considers s/he is suffering from unequal treatment on any of the grounds referred to above may implement the grievance procedure.

Conditions of participation

Adherence to this policy is a condition of participation in our services. Service users have a right to be open about all their views unless those views conflict with the aims and objectives of CWP's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Conditions of Service

Adherence to CWP's Equal Opportunities Policy is a condition of employment.

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

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CWP recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will do whatever it can to make those changes.

Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant women employees in order to attend antenatal classes, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

CWP's paternity and maternity leave and conditions are set out in the Staff Handbook. The organisation will look at ways of improving these conditions.

Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees regardless of length of service, to facilitate caring for children and other dependants. Requests for part-time working, job sharing, and flexitime will receive fair and equal consideration subject to operational requirements.

CWP will endeavour to ensure that all its premises are accessible to people with a disability. It will always provide information on access on request as part of any document asking people to come to CWP buildings.

Where a member of staff becomes disabled or an existing condition or impairment deteriorates, CWP will endeavour to retain the member of staff in its employment by making reasonable adjustments to the job or providing preferential interviews for other suitable vacant posts.

Staff have a right to be open about all their views unless those views conflict with the aims and objectives of CWP's Equal Opportunities Policy.

CWP believes that men and women should be treated equally in terms of retirement age and benefits. The retirement age in the organisation for both men and women is 67.

CWP respects the right of all individuals to follow the religion of their choice and to adhere to the customs of their culture. The wearing of religious or cultural dress will not be discouraged.

CWP supports the policy of equality for part-time workers in terms of pay and other terms and conditions including access to training.

Monitoring

CWP is committed to monitoring to ensure effective implementation of the policy. To ensure that this policy is operating effectively (and for no other purpose), CWP maintains records of applicants and employees' ethnic origins and disability.

All information collected for monitoring will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from the process of selection of staff.

Annual monitoring will show the current staff profile with a breakdown by grade, programme, race, sex, age, and disability.

CWP will ensure that any information gathered for the purpose of monitoring will only be used for monitoring and will be protected from misuse, in accordance with Data Protection laws.

The CEO will be responsible for monitoring and will prepare a report on the results annually.

Monitoring results will be available to all staff.

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Implementation and Monitoring of this policy

CWP is committed to monitoring to ensure effective implementation of the policy. All information collected for monitoring will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from the process of selection of students and volunteers.

This policy will be reviewed by CWP annually