Ceddesfeld Hall home of the

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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1. Our commitment

Sedgefield Arts, Recreation and Community Association CIO (SCA) are committed to providing equal opportunities and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. This policy intends to assist putting this into practice. Our aim is that the SCA is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, which is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities. We have a separate anti-harassment and bullying policy, which deals with these issues.

2. The law

It is unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user in the provision of services or goods or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

3. Types of unlawful discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However, discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a job role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- **Associative discrimination** is where the individual treated less favourably does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does, eg the parent of a disabled child.
- **Perceptive discrimination** is where the individual discriminated against or harassed does not have a protected characteristic but they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Third-party harassment** occurs where an employee or volunteer is harassed by third parties such as service users, due to a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act, ie because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

4. Equal opportunities in employment

We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Job descriptions will avoid any unnecessary requirements (those unrelated to effective performance) that may otherwise have deterred applicants. We will base decisions on objective criteria. We will consider making reasonable adjustments in recruitment as well as in day-to-day employment.

5. Service users, suppliers and others

We will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using or seeking to use the services we provide. If you are bullied or harassed by a service user, suppliers, contractor, visitor or others, or if you witness someone else being bullied of harassed, you are asked to report this to a Trustee who will take appropriate action.

6. Training

We will provide information and guidance to those involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise to help them understand their responsibilities and to avoid the risk of discrimination.

7. Personal responsibilities

All members and staff have a responsibility to support SCA to meet its commitment and avoid unlawful discrimination. If you believe that you have been discriminated against you should report this to SCA Secretary under the grievance procedure. We take any complaint seriously and you will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

If you witness what you believe to be discrimination you should report this to a Trustee.

Trustees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Anyone who commits serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, members or building users are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our complaints or disciplinary procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. We will report to the board of trustees on any actions or activities undertaken to improve equality of opportunity. Any information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1998 and the Genera Data Protection Regulations..

Signed on behalf of SCA.....Wendy R Gill.....

Date.Adopted.....16/7/26.....

Next review date.....31/7/28.....