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	Date Created:	05/12/2017	Author:	Claire Williams	
	Version No.	Review Date	Approved by	Approval Date	Next Review
	9	19/02/2018	WT Board	05/10/2016	18/02/2019

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish a framework which ensures fair treatment for all employees, volunteers, and all those to whom we offer services or with whom we work in partnership. This can only be achieved by identifying barriers to accessing and delivering services, by respecting diversity, increasing inclusion and by eliminating discrimination
- provide a work environment free from verbal, physical and visual harassment or behaviour, which may be objectionable or offensive to staff, clients, Directors or Trustees.

2. Policy Statement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are themes which directly impact our ability to achieve the goals set out in our strategic plan, and which guide our relationships with staff, clients and partners.

Wheatsheaf Trust believes that the dignity of every person must be respected. We believe in a culture that is inclusive and values people for their contribution and talents. Our workplace is a no-go zone for discrimination. We are proud to be committed to:

- Helping all our staff feel valued and included.
- Showing staff, potential recruits, clients and partners that we are serious about fairness.
- Complying with the law and adopting best practice.
- Winning business by showing that we are inclusive and forward thinking.

We aim to have staff who broadly represent the communities they serve.

We will seek the widest range of suitable candidates for jobs with the Trust with the aim of reaching groups of people currently under-represented in the workforce. We will undertake positive action where we identify a need.

Our recruitment and selection processes will be justifiable, systematic and transparent.

All job applicants will be issued with a copy of the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

The Trust's employment policies and practices will be open and fair, monitored for consistency, and reviewed regularly to ensure they are actively supporting the objectives of this policy. We will develop policies and practices that support our wider goals of equality, diversity and inclusions such as flexible working, retirement, recruitment and selection.

Where the Trust provides services in association with other organisations, it will aim to build on their expertise and success, and promoting the principle of equality, diversity and inclusion with partners at all times.

Harassment of colleagues or visitors is unacceptable conduct and will normally be regarded as gross misconduct. All employees should be sensitive to the individual rights and feelings of

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their fellow employees. The highest standards of conduct are required of everyone regardless of seniority.

The Equality Act 2010 uses a single definition of harassment to cover protected characteristics. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

The Trust recognises that harassment may take many forms. One form of harassment is sexual harassment, which can include, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature by one employee towards another.

Harassment can also include racial harassment, which covers any verbal, visual or physical conduct, which causes embarrassment or distress to another employee of a particular colour, ethnic background or religion.

Additionally an employee could be subjected to harassment on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

In addition, the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves and can be because of perception or association.

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity where any unfavourable treatment may be considered discrimination and marriage and civil partnership.

Harassment could relate to :

- religious or political convictions
- membership or non-membership of a trade union
- disability, sensory impairments or learning difficulties or a perceived disability
- age

This list is not exhaustive.

Harassment may result in the recipient feeling threatened, humiliated, intimidated, patronised, demoralised or less confident in their ability. Condoning such conduct may be harassment in itself. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- Verbal abuse or insulting behaviour;
- Sexist or racist jokes, jokes about an individual's sexual orientation or jokes about an individual's physical or mental attributes;
- The display or circulation of sexually suggestive or racially abusive material;
- Bullying, coercive or threatening behaviour;
- The ridicule or exclusion of an individual for cultural or religious differences, on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation or on the grounds of disability;
- Unwelcome sexual advances including touching, staring or commenting;
- Comments of a sexual nature about a person's appearance or dress.

Procedure

In the first instance, a recipient or witness of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment may attempt to resolve the problem by explaining to the individual concerned that the behaviour is

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not welcome, that it offends or makes them uncomfortable and that it interferes with their work.

In some situations the employee may find it too difficult or embarrassing to take up the matter themselves and so may seek confidential assistance from their Line Manager. An informal approach to the allegations will be treated as completely confidential and will not result in a report to anyone within the Trust unless the employee agrees. This may take the form of an informal meeting between the Line Manager, the individual and the alleged perpetrator(s) or may, at the individual's request, involve an informal approach by the Line Manager to the alleged perpetrator(s) on behalf of the individual.

Where informal resolution is not appropriate, is not requested or where the outcome has been unsatisfactory then the individual should instigate the Trust's formal Grievance Procedure.

Allegations of harassment in the workplace will be conducted in an independent and objective manner by someone unconnected with the allegations and at least of equal grade/status with the alleged harasser.

Investigations will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. All those interviewed will be permitted to be accompanied by a friend, colleague or representative of their Trade Union or professional organisation.

Wherever possible consideration will be given to ensuring the complainant and alleged harasser are not required to work together whilst the complaint is under investigation.

The results of the investigation will be made known to the parties in accordance with the formal Grievance Procedure.

Employees should note that an employee who, after investigation, is thought to be guilty of harassment would be subject to the Trust's formal Disciplinary Procedure. Any employee who is found to be guilty of making an unfounded and malicious claim of harassment against another employee will also be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and depending on the circumstances, such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct

3. Applicability

This policy applies to staff, potential staff, Trustees, volunteers and clients. Any breach of this policy may be investigated under the terms of the Trust's disciplinary procedure and this could lead to dismissal. The Trust reserves the right to refuse to work with, or to withdraw services from, anyone displaying discriminatory behaviour or other behaviour in contravention of this policy.

4. Definitions of terms

Equality – The Equality Act covers nine protected characteristics which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The Equality Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

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The act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities and services, when exercising public functions, in the disposal and management of premises, in education and by associations (such as private clubs).

Inclusion – is where employers take steps to improve their service through recognising the value of individual differences and having the confidence to actively encourage and support such differences within the workforce.

Discrimination – Unlawful direct discrimination is where an individual or group of individuals is treated less favourably than others on the grounds of a protected characteristic.. Indirect discrimination may still occur when a requirement or condition is applied equally all potential employees or employees but disadvantages a particular characteristic. In many instances, where this treatment cannot be justified, it is also illegal.

Victimisation - Anyone bringing proceedings, giving evidence or information, or alleging contravention of the Equality Act, if done in good faith, is protected under the law from victimisation.

Harassment – Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. The Equality Act prohibits sexual harassment and less favourable treatment of an employee because he or she submits to or rejects sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. The victims of harassment do not have to possess the ‘protected characteristic’ themselves. Consequently, the Act prohibits harassment based on association and perception, and employees will be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

5. Getting Help

If you need advice or support in relation to this policy, there are a number of sources of support available to you. Please contact your manager if you:

- need further information or an explanation of any aspect of this policy,
- believe that you have witnessed behaviour that contravenes this policy
- feel that you have suffered treatment that is in contravention of this policy
- you have a suggestion that would improve our practices in terms of equality, diversity or inclusion.

If you feel unable to discuss the matter with your manager, please contact the Chief Executive.

6. Links to Other Policies

All employment related policies will be subject to an equality impact assessment when they are reviewed in order to ensure that they actively support the principles set out in this policy. Policies most directly related are the Grievance Procedure, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Appraisal, Pay, Redundancy, Positive Action, disciplinary procedure.

7. Implementation Procedures

All new staff will receive an Equalities briefing as part of their induction process. Evidence of staff taking active steps to support this policy will be considered during annual appraisals. Equalities Training will be available to all managers.

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We will undertake informal observations, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and other structured methods of evaluating services with staff and service users to ensure that our policy objectives are known and visible through our actions.

We may ask funders and service users to give relevant information about themselves for monitoring purposes.

We will undertake confidential equalities monitoring of our recruitment processes and staff group.

We will take active steps to share our values and experience with other groups/organisations and individuals.