



### 1. Scope

- Cornwall Hugs is dedicated to being non-discriminatory, offering equal opportunities, celebrating diversity and being inclusive of all people regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Cornwall Hugs is committed to providing an environment in which all users of our services are treated equally according to their needs. Workers, volunteers and trustees are required to be fully aware of their responsibilities in this respect and to ensure that none of the systems operate to exclude or discourage participation of any particular groups.

### 2. Definitions

- Workers: Freelance workers and partner organisations. Herein referred to as 'workers'
- Volunteers: any person giving of their time freely in support of Cornwall Hugs and its endeavours.
- Trustees: Members of the board who have control and powers of administration of property in trust with a legal obligation to administer it solely for the purposes specified.
- Clients: Clients include anyone that is receiving, has expressed an interest in receiving, or has received services from Cornwall Hugs.
- Protected Characteristics: Characteristics protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. These are as: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Herein referred to as 'protected characteristics.'
- Race: includes colour, nationality, national origin, and ethnic origin.

### 3. Applicability

- Applicable Law: Equality Act 2010
- The policy applies to all Trustees, freelance workers, volunteers and partner organisations.

### 3. Policy

- The application of Cornwall Hugs' Equal Opportunities Policy is the responsibility of all Trustees, workers and volunteers. It is recognised that those who hold management and supervisory positions have additional and particular responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of its application, and the commitment of all workers to it.
- All clients can expect that they will be treated with respect and afforded every opportunity irrespective of their protected characteristics.

### 4. Responsibilities Of Trustees, Workers and Volunteers

- All trustees, workers and volunteers must follow the Cornwall Hugs Code of Conduct and abide by all Cornwall Hugs policies. This means that they must



make every effort to ensure impartiality and avoid discrimination of any kind (\*see guidance in section 6 below).

- All trustees, workers and volunteers are individually accountable for their own actions. They should, however, also work together as a team to ensure that standards of behaviour comply with the equal opportunities policy.
- Trustees, workers and volunteers who suspect a breach of the equal opportunities policy have a duty to inform the Trustees immediately.
- Any worker who harasses any other person on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics will be subject to Cornwall Hugs disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, will result in summary dismissal in the absence of acceptable mitigating circumstances.

### 5. Responsibilities Of Recruitment

- Cornwall Hugs aims to develop and maintain practices which ensure equality of opportunity in service delivery, recruitment and fair selection. We aim to create a working environment in which all workers feel welcome and safe, and have an opportunity to progress according to their relevant abilities.
- Cornwall Hugs aims to ensure that people are given equal opportunities to join the charity in the capacity of freelance worker, volunteer or trustee. In doing so it will fully consider reasonable adjustments to recruitment procedures to prevent putting anyone at a disadvantage with regards to any of the protected characteristics.
- Commitment to equal opportunities is a requirement for all workers. In particular it is recognised that those responsible for selection of workers or business partners have a special duty to guard against discriminatory practices and attitudes. In addition to ensuring non-discrimination on any of the grounds of the protected characteristics, recruitment selectors will also avoid arbitrary age discrimination. Any job applicant who believes he or she has been inequitably treated should write to the Trustees, who will investigate the complaint.

### 6. Types of Discrimination

- In general, discrimination is prohibited but there are circumstances where there are legal exemptions. These may be where it is necessary to protect someone's health and safety, or where it is to comply with an order of a court or tribunal for example.
- Discrimination may be direct, indirect, perceptive, or associative and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Religious Belief, Sex, or Sexual Orientation. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.



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- Perceptive discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of a belief that they have one or more of the protected characteristics. For example, an employee is not allowed to represent the organisation at an international meeting as it is perceived that they are too young.
- Associative discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of an association with an individual with one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, refusing a promotion on the grounds of having a dependant with a disability.
- Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is *'unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.'*
- Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

### 7. Redress

- Any client, worker, volunteer or Trustee of Cornwall Hugs who believes that they have been discriminated against should immediately raise the matter with the Trustees, who will investigate the complaint.

### 8 Declaration

- I have read the Equal Opportunities Policy above and fully understand my obligations and the consequences of any breach of confidentiality.
- I will abide by the equal opportunities policy set out above.

Name:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

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