



**DISABILITY  
RESOURCE  
CENTRE**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES  
POLICY**

January 2005

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## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

The Disability Resource Centre shall be for the benefit of all service users over age of 16 and staff, volunteers and visitors with disabilities irrespective of their disability, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin or ex-offender status (In order to protect the users of the Centre staff are exempt from Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975), and that they be free from intentional and unintentional discrimination of any kind whilst at the Centre or on DRC transport.

With reference to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act the Waltham Forest Disability Resource Centre aims to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential. The Waltham Forest Disability Resource Centre welcomes applications from diverse candidates. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Having an unspent conviction will not necessarily bar anyone from employment; it will depend on the circumstances and background of the offence.

We accept that some groups mentioned above are under represented in the DRC and recommend the Centre provides for these groups individually through, for example, special activity groups, publicity and contact aimed specifically at these groups, and other appropriate ways for these groups to be supported in the Centre.

This policy is endorsed by the DRC Management Committee. Responsibility for its effective implementation, management, monitoring and review lies with everybody.

Following the pilot scheme for older people, we are actively seeking funding provide services for people between the ages of 65-75.

Signed

Chair..... Date.....

Vice Chair..... Date.....

## **DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION**

Unfair or unequal treatment of somebody because of his or her age, sex, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, HIV status or disability

Unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice

Discrimination is when an individual acts on any set of ideas, beliefs or attitudes that negatively prejudices groups or individuals on the basis of real or alleged characteristics and traits.

## **DEFINITIONS OF HARASSMENT**

Harassment can be intentional or unintentional and can range from:

- a) Physical Acts: this includes unwanted touching, hugging, pushing etc to serious assault.
- b) Verbal: this includes sexual innuendo, request for sexual favours, lewd remarks, jokes which are targeted at a particular group (e.g. racial, sexual, people with a disability), offensive language, insults, questions about a person's private life, gossip and slander.
- c) Non-verbal: this includes offensive photographs, calendars, ornaments, literature or computer based graphics, obscene gestures, leering, staring, graffiti and emblems.
  - d) Bullying or intimidating anyone
  - e) Unfairly singling a person out for unnecessary deliberate criticism either of a personal or professional nature
  - f) Isolating someone, or sending a person to Coventry
  - g) Intrusion by pestering, spying, following etc.

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Management Committee has prime responsibility within the DRC to ensure the Equal Opportunities Policy is upheld, but the success of this policy depends on the co-operation and commitment of all.

To do this, Management Committee members need to have a full understanding of all Equal Opportunities issues.

All Management Committee members should undertake Equal Opportunities training.

The Management Committee has responsibility for raising awareness about Equal Opportunities issues amongst the users.

The Management Committee must ensure it regularly discusses Equal Opportunities issues in the Centre. It should undertake monitoring of the progress of the Equal Opportunities Policy at least twice per year or when legislation demands.

The Management Committee has responsibility to organise open discussions involving everyone in the Centre: -

- Management Committee
- Users
- Staff
- Volunteers

with regards participation in the Centre and the progress of equal opportunities.

The composition of the Management Committee should reflect the population who are eligible to use the service. If necessary, the Management Committee should use its powers to co-opt new members if a particular group or groups are under- represented.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

There should be a balance of staff representing people with disabilities from all groups in the Equal Opportunities Statement. In particular we should:

- Encourage more Women Drivers
- Have some people on the staff group who use British Sign Language and other community languages.

A Recruitment Policy should be maintained and developed in the light of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

With reference to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act the Waltham Forest Disability Resource Centre aims to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential. The Waltham Forest Disability Resource Centre welcomes applications from diverse candidates. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Having an unspent conviction will not necessarily bar anyone from employment; it will depend on the circumstances and background of the offence.

The DRC is committed to abide by the following Acts.

- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- The Gender Reassignment Amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act 1999.
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Race Relations Act 1976.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

### **Support**

Positive action should be taken for all staff in need of support.

### **Training**

The Training Policy should be maintained and developed in the light of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Everyone should have access to training. The effectiveness of training should be monitored.

Sign Language training should be made available for staff.

## **SERVICE USERS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

All service users, staff and volunteers have a right to participate in and have a voice in the DRC according to the Equal Opportunities Statement.

All service users, staff and volunteers should respect the right of people with disabilities, from all groups in the Equal Opportunities Statement, to participate in the Centre.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

All service users, staff and volunteers must be made aware of their responsibility to uphold the Equal Opportunities Policy.

If there is unacceptable behaviour under the Equal Opportunities Policy by any user, this must be dealt with as seriously as for any Management Committee member, staff or volunteer, and could lead to warnings, restrictions or ultimately to exclusion from the Centre.

### **COMPLAINTS/PROBLEMS**

Any service user, member of staff or volunteer, who becomes aware of a valid complaint/problem under the Equal Opportunities Policy, **MUST** personally ensure that is properly reported, by following the Complaints Procedure.

The Complaints procedure has been reviewed in the light of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **PRIORITIES**

An aim of the DRC is to maximise user's choice within the Centre. However the choice of users to undertake some activities can affect the other users, and priorities may have to be decided in order to achieve Equal Opportunities for all.

### **TRANSPORT**

Our aim is to ensure, where possible, that users have a right to travel with a male or female driver/escort if they choose.

We recognise that transport is such a crucial issue that the Transport Policies should be considered in the light of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **PUBLICITY**

In order to attract the widest range of users from different groups, publicity about the DRC should be made as widely as possible.

In order to attract users from groups who are under-represented, we will ensure this includes: -

- Publicity on audiotape and Braille.
- Publicity materials translated into different languages.
- Visits to appropriate Community Groups and Centres to do talks/displays etc. For example, places of worship, ethnic minority community groups, youth centres and others.
- Publicity in other disability publications/newsletters.

All publicity about the DRC should aim to include 'positive images' of disabilities from all the groups in the Equal Opportunities Statement, in the Annual Report and in Leaflets.

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**Reviewed on**

Ref:\ Server/new user documentation/March 05