

Hotwells and Cliftonwood Community Association

Equal Opportunities Statement & Policy

Statement of Intent

Hotwells and Cliftonwood Community Association (here after called HCCA) exists to work for the benefit of the inhabitants of Hotwells and Cliftonwood and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, race or disability, or of political, religious or other opinions.

The HCCA recognises that certain people and groups in our society face prejudice, and as a consequence discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, physical sensory or mental disability, marital status, caring responsibilities, political beliefs, age, social class, religious belief, sexuality and employment status. As a result they tend to suffer higher levels of poverty and unemployment, and worse housing than the rest of the population, as well as poorer access to education and recreational services. Discrimination also means that certain groups are more likely to be excluded from decision making processes on matters that affect their lives, and can be portrayed in a negative and stereotypical manner.

The HCCA is committed to Equal Opportunities. No job applicant, employee, volunteer or user of the HCCA's services should receive less favourable treatment, because of, or in relation to, any of the factors mentioned above.

The HCCA accepts the Race Relations Act of 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to opposing all forms of discrimination faced by oppressed groups in society.

The HCCA supports employees rights to become Trade Union members and for them to be accorded trade union representation.

POLICY

1. Management Committee (MC)

- a) The MC shall be elected at the AGM in accordance with the Constitution.
- b) Eligibility for the election of the MC shall be as detailed in the Constitution.
- c) The date of the AGM will be displayed notice boards, advertised on the HCCA website and announced through any other communication systems.
- d) All information for the Management Committee meetings will be circulated in writing in advance, and will be presented in a form which can be easily understood. Members are encouraged to seek clarification of any information from staff members should this be necessary.
- e) Special needs of members for meetings will be taken into account, e.g. accessibility of premises, transport needs, childcare needs, translators, and signers.

2. Users

- a) The HCCA will endeavour to meet the needs of specific users and user groups, by providing services, activities, facilities and events that will enable them to participate.
- b) The HCCA will endeavour to work with and empower people within the local community who are most likely to suffer from deprivation and/or discrimination.
- c) The HCCA will constantly strive to canvas the views and needs of marginalised groups in the community and tailor the HCCA services and activities to their needs.

3. Volunteers

- a) Volunteers perform many vital functions within the work of the HCCA. When advertising for new volunteers, this will be carried out in such a way as to ensure that under-represented groups are aware of volunteering possibilities.
- b) Volunteers will, wherever possible, be given access to relevant training courses as available. Course fees and transport costs will be met when funds allow. Additionally, volunteers will be given in house training appropriate to their needs.
- c) Reimbursement for expenses, such as for travel, or for a meal incurred in carrying out volunteering duties for the HCCA will be met when it is considered that not meeting such expenses would disadvantage a volunteer or dissuade them from continuing to volunteer with HCCA.
- d) Volunteers will be encouraged to take part in the decision making process of the HCCA.

4. Staff Recruitment

- a) We will recruit and employ people on an equal basis and ensure that no applicant or employee is excluded or unfairly treated on any of the grounds listed above.
- b) Job advertisements will state: 'The HCCA is an Equal Opportunity employer'.
- c) The HCCA will not discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment by including any criteria or requirements which are unnecessary to the post.
- d) There will be no 'word of mouth' recruitment for permanent posts. Posts will not be advertised in such a way that would exclude minority or disadvantaged groups.
- e) Shortlisting and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person, and will be done solely according to the person specification.
- f) Interview questions will be related to the requirements and circumstances of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- g) Selection decisions must not be influenced by criteria relating to the sex, marital status, race, religion, creed, colour, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation of the postholder, unless for genuine occupational reasons.
- h) All applicants will be processed in exactly the same way.

5. Staff – Employment

- a) Direct racial or sexual discrimination and sexual harassment/abuse will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- b) Abuse or harassment of any member of a group referred to in the Statement of Intent will be treated as a disciplinary offence. An employee who has in good faith taken action under the Equal Opportunities policy will not receive less favourable treatment than any other employee, e.g. by being subjected to disciplinary action.

- c) Care will be taken to deal effectively with all complaints or discriminations, victimisation or harassment. It should not be assumed that such complaints are made by those who are over sensitive. Complaints would normally be processed through the HCCA grievance procedure in the first instance.
- d) Provision will be made within the training budget for staff to receive training in Equal Opportunities.

6. Monitoring

All applicants for paid staff positions, volunteer/permanent positions will be sent monitoring forms with application forms. Separate envelopes will be enclosed for their return. These will not be seen by the interviewing/shortlisting panel before interviews.

7. Complaints Procedure

- a) The complaints procedure exists to ensure that any problems or issues an individual or group might wish to raise are dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.
- b) An individual or group with a complaint should raise the matter with the Chair of the Trustees or if preferred with another member of the Management Committee. This should be recorded, shown to the complainant and put on file. Where possible a solution should be discussed and a period agreed for review (usually 7 days).
- c) If at this review the complainant feels the matter has not been resolved, a meeting will be called with Management Committee (if Chair was approached under 'b') or with the Chair of Trustees (if the approach was made to a member of the Committee) usually within 7 days of the first review. This should be recorded, shown to the complainant and put on file.
- d) It will be for the relevant person or persons at this last stage to do everything reasonably possible to try and resolve the complaint without compromising the position of the HCCA.
- e) Any complainant may be represented at any stage by a representative or a friend.