



## Equal Opportunities

### Overview

The Doddridge Centre Ltd is committed to equal opportunities to maintaining a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying. This policy is intended to assist putting this commitment into practice. Our aim is that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone that the charities work brings us into contact with is treated with dignity and respect.

In all aspects of employment the organisation's aim is to ensure that all applicants, employees and workers receive equal treatment irrespective of their sex, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, colour, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, disability or age ("the Protected Characteristics").

Fixed-term and part-time workers are also protected from being treated less favourably than their permanent full-time counterparts and we are committed to parity of treatment. This policy has been approved by the organisation's management who vigorously endorse the principles of non-discrimination.

Unlawful discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated by the Company and those responsible for any such action or any other breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under the Company's disciplinary procedure (up to and including summary dismissal) and may also be personally liable for their unlawful conduct. In some cases, this may include a criminal liability.

This policy does not have contractual effect and is given by way of guidance only. The policy is not exhaustive. The Company reserves the right to amend or replace this policy at any time. The policy applies to all persons working for us, whether as employee, self-employed or casual worker, full or part time, paid or unpaid, volunteer or on any other basis

### Policy

The laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace affect all our employment decisions. We do not discriminate against any person working for us or involved with our business (whether as customer, supplier or otherwise) because of any of the Protected Characteristics, nor do we allow any member of staff to discriminate because of any of the Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

This includes, but is not limited to, decisions relating to job advertisements, recruitment and selection, transfers and promotions, training and development, salary, health and safety,

benefits, disciplinary and grievance issues, termination of employment and severance terms.

We seek to monitor our employment practices regularly, whether formally or informally, to identify and eliminate any potentially discriminatory practices. All members of staff working for us are expected to comply with the principles of non-discrimination set out in this policy and in law. We aim to provide managers and other members of staff with equal opportunities training. When recruiting members of staff, we may also request and/or record data relating to the Protected Characteristics to assist compliance with this policy.

All workers should treat each other with equal respect. You are responsible not only for your own actions but to ensure that the actions of others do not breach the spirit and intent of this policy and the anti-discrimination legislation. Any discriminatory act should be reported immediately to The Centre Director and failure to do so may render you liable to disciplinary action.

### **Clients, Suppliers and Others**

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

### **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.

Additionally, all staff & volunteers will undertake Equality & Diversity training both as part of their induction and their ongoing development.

### **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 behavior 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 e.g. 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 is harassed by third parties such as Clients, due to a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act i.e. because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- **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.

Discrimination can still take place even after employment has ended.

## **Disability**

Disabled workers have special protection under the law, including an employer's duty to make reasonable adjustments to their job where appropriate.

If you consider that you may be disabled within the meaning of UK disability legislation, you should notify The Centre Director.

The organisation will discuss with you whether you are able to fulfill your proposed duties and whether there are any adjustments that could reasonably be made to your job or working environment to enable you to carry out your proposed duties effectively. The organisation may also ask a medical advisor to assist in these matters.

## **Religion and Other Beliefs**

Where you consider that your religious or other beliefs impact on your job or your ability to carry out your job in a particular way, you should discuss this with The Centre Director who will, where appropriate, ascertain whether your concerns can be accommodated.

## **Your Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible to support the charity to meet its commitment and avoid unlawful discrimination. If you believe that you have been discriminated against you should report this to your line manager 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 your line manager or in the case that your line manager is involved another member of the management team.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Charity for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees/Clients or others are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

## **Complaints procedure**

This procedure contains an informal and formal route and applies to complaints relating to discrimination or victimisation because of any of the Protected Characteristics. If you believe that any such form of discrimination or victimisation is taking place you must follow this complaints procedure. The route you choose may depend on the seriousness of your complaint and how you would like the matter to be dealt with. Please note that a separate procedure exists for cases of bullying and harassment and you are referred to the Bullying and Harassment Procedure.

It is in your interests to present any complaint promptly, to enable action to take place as soon as possible. You will be asked to substantiate the complaint with any evidence or examples you have. Any complaint made under this procedure will be handled by the organisation sensitively, discreetly and confidentially.

### **Informal procedure**

If you believe that you are suffering discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying, you should, if possible, attempt in the first instance to resolve the issue with the person whom you believe is responsible for such treatment. You may inform him or her, in writing or verbally, that you consider his or her conduct is unacceptable and must stop. You are advised to keep a written record of the events, dates and any relevant documentation from the outset.

If, for any reason, you feel you cannot raise the matter directly with the person concerned, you are encouraged to contact your line manager, who will discuss the matter with you. If your line manager is directly involved or you feel uncomfortable discussing this matter with him or her for whatever reason, you may prefer to approach The Centre Director on an informal basis.

If the complaint is upheld even at this informal stage depending on the seriousness and the nature of the complaint, the organisation may take disciplinary action in relation to the individual(s) responsible for the treatment.

### **Formal procedure**

If you wish to pursue the matter formally, you will be asked to make a formal complaint under the organisation's grievance procedure. Even if you decide not to take the matter further, the organisation may have a duty towards other employees to investigate the matter fully.

Where a complaint has been made, the organisation will initiate an investigation as soon as practicable, to determine whether or not disciplinary action should be taken under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

If your complaint is well-founded, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual(s) accused of discrimination, victimisation, and harassment or bullying (up to and including summary dismissal).


If your complaint is not well-founded, the organisation will advise you accordingly. If you have acted in good faith and with good reason, the fact that you have brought a complaint will not affect your position within the organisation.

If, however, your complaint has been made in bad faith or brought without good reason, you may be subject to the organisation's disciplinary procedure (up to and including summary dismissal).

The Centre Director will keep a record of your complaint, the investigation, the conclusion and any subsequent action taken.

### **Appeals**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint raised under this policy, or with the way in which it was handled, you may present an appeal in accordance with the organisation's grievance policy.

<b>Authorised on behalf of the Executive Committee</b>		
<b>Signed: Graham Croucher Chair of Trustees</b> <b>Dated: 10/12/2021</b>		
<b>Policy valid until:</b> <b>10 December 2023</b>	<b>Policy to be reviewed on:</b> <b>10 December 2022</b>	