



Rochdale Circle CIC Equality Opportunities Policy

V1 June 2024



POLICY UPDATES

Version Number	Date Updated	Pages/Sections Reviewed	Pages/Sections Updated
1	11/06/24	ISSUED	ALL
2			
3			



1 Purpose

We are an equal opportunities employer and are committed to a policy of treating all our employees and job applicants equally and ensuring that our workplace is free from unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, national origin, ethnic origin, caste, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or age. Our Equalities & Diversity Statement can be found in section 2.

All employment decisions will be made without taking into account irrelevant discriminatory factors.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. The Company has a separate Dignity at Work Policy which deals with these issues.

This policy is intended to assist us in putting this commitment into practice and its compliance will ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination. Any breach of this policy by employees will be treated seriously. A single incident, if serious enough, may be classed as Gross Misconduct and result in summary dismissal.

2 Equalities & Diversity Statement

Rochdale Circle CIC is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best

To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and volunteering and not to discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary and volunteers will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce and volunteers will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our commitment:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and volunteers are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and volunteer are entitled to a working/volunteering environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff and volunteers.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.



Circle

- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

- This policy is fully supported by the board
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually (last review June 2024)

3 The Legislation

Relevant Legislation: Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment on grounds of sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, caste, sexual orientation or religion or belief, or because someone is married or is a civil partner. These are known as "protected characteristics". It is unlawful to treat someone less favourably on grounds of disability than others without that disability are or would be treated, unless the less favourable treatment can be justified, or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to employment caused by disability. It is unlawful to discriminate unjustifiably on grounds of age in relation to employment.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in the provision of goods, facilities or services to customers on grounds of sex (which may include gender reassignment), pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins or caste. It is unlawful to discriminate, without justification, on grounds of disability or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, for example: refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics. Some types of harassment or bullying will be unlawful discrimination.

It is unlawful to victimise someone because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

4 Types of Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is unjustifiably treated less favourably on the grounds of their sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, caste, sexual orientation or religion or belief, or because someone is married or is a civil partner, disability or age. In limited circumstances, direct discrimination may be lawful where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of



achievement a legitimate aim. An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she was pregnant.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when an unjustified provision, condition or practice is imposed which one group of people find more difficult to satisfy than another and it places the individual at a disadvantage. An example of indirect sex discrimination could be requiring everyone to work full time unless there is a good reason, unrelated to sex, as to why the particular job has to be done on a full-time basis, since requiring everyone to work full time will normally adversely affect a higher proportion of women than men.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct relating to sex, gender reassignment, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, caste, sexual orientation or religion or belief, or, disability or age, (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, or is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his or her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him or her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative Discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive Discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Third-party Harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity), by third parties such as clients or customers. For an employer to be liable;

- The harassment must have occurred on at least two previous occasions (although not necessarily by the same harasser or suffering the same type of harassment);
- It must be aware that the previous harassment has taken place; and
- It must have failed to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment from happening again.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Victimisation is where someone is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need for a complaint to compare his or her treatment with someone who has not made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act 2010. For example, if a blind employee raises a grievance that the employer is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and is then systematically excluded from all meetings, such behaviour could amount to victimisation.

5 Equal Opportunities in Employment

The Company will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.



Job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

The Company will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and we will refuse such requests only if we have good reasons, unrelated to any discriminatory factors. We will comply with our obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

We will not discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but the Company may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group which the Company identifies as being underrepresented in particular types of job.

6 Customers, Suppliers, Visitors and Others

The Company will not discriminate unlawfully against customers, suppliers, visitors or others using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by us. Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their Director who will take appropriate action.

7 Training

We will provide information to all employees regarding Equal Opportunities and provide guidance and training to Directors and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

8 Your Responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the Company to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Company for any act of unlawful discrimination and in serious instances, may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, patients or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

9 Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the Company's Grievance Procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the Dignity at Work Policy.



The Company will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance which it upholds. 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

10 Monitoring



This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes to employment law.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Rochdale Circle CIC Equal Opportunities Policy Approval & Sign Off

Policy approval:

Approved By:

Signature	Name / Position	Date
	Mark Wynn Director	
	Dianne David Chair – Board of Directors	18.06.2024

Review Date: JUNE 2025

