

THE GATEHOUSE POLICY: Equal Opportunities

Policy ID Number: P03

Policy Passed by Board of Trustees: January 2015 Valid until: January 2020

- **Policy Statements**

- The purpose of this policy is to provide a formal structure for our working environment and to ensure there is good management in equal opportunities throughout The Gatehouse.
- The Gatehouse is committed to the principle of inclusion, anti-discrimination and equal opportunities practice at all levels of its service, for all Guests (users of the service), volunteers, students and staff. The Gatehouse is also committed to the principle of creating Equal Opportunities in employment for all individuals, both employees and job applicants, in all aspects of its work.
- The Gatehouse aims to create a working environment where there is equality of opportunity and which is free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the grounds of a protected characteristic, whether it be on the grounds of gender (including gender reassignment), race, disability, sexual orientation, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious or philosophical belief, physical characteristics, age, marital status, pregnancy and maternity as outlined in The Equality Act 2010.
- The Gatehouse believes that nobody should be excluded from equal access, or treated adversely, on any one or more of these grounds.
- The Equality Act 2010 outlines the rules which apply to equal opportunities in the workplace.

- **Responsibility For The Policy**

- Overall responsibility for ensuring the Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented at The Gatehouse lies with the Trustee's. The day to day responsibility for this is delegated to the Project Director.

- **Making the policy effective**

- The Policy will be discussed with all new job applicants and current employees and volunteers to ensure that all concerned are familiar with the requirements and are able to deal with matters of Equal Opportunities in a consistent manner.
- Every employee and volunteer will have access to the Policy and will be encouraged to apply it throughout their working practices and their time with The Gatehouse. Where necessary, training will be provided to employees, volunteers and managers to ensure proper effectiveness.
- An anonymous system for recording and monitoring the composition of the workforce and of job applicants is in place with reference to their ethnic origin, gender, marital status and disabilities, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and to identify areas for positive action.

- **Your Role As An Employee**

- All employees volunteers and students you are requested and required to uphold the Equal Opportunities Policy and must be aware that any breach of the Policy could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. In some circumstances an individual who breaches this Policy may also be personally liable at law for discriminatory action.

- It is therefore important that you should:-
 - Actively participate in the spirit of the Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination, and as a decision maker, in selection, recruitment, promotion and training those working with you.
 - Actively participate in the spirit of the Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination to the users of The Gatehouse (Guests).
 - We would encourage any staff member, volunteer and student to raise a grievance in accordance with The Gatehouse Grievance Procedure as quickly as possible if you are subjected to, or witness any evidence of discrimination.
 - If you do not feel comfortable bringing a formal grievance, you should immediately bring to the attention of your line manager any discriminatory acts or practices of which you are aware.
- If you have brought a grievance or notified management informally in this manner, you will not be victimised or treated differently in any way because of that. Victimisation in this way would amount to discrimination in itself.

- **What Is Discrimination?**

- Discrimination can be both direct and indirect. The former is generally easy to identify, whereas indirect forms can be difficult to identify because they are not, on the face of it, immediately obvious.
- Discrimination can occur under on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender assignment, religion or belief, age, pregnancy and maternity and disability. Under UK legislation, an employee who is guilty of a discriminatory act, may be personally liable for this action.

- **Direct Discrimination**

- Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of one of the previously mentioned protected characteristics which they have, or are thought to have. This could include, for example:
 - Refusal to employ a woman with young children as it is feared she might be unreliable
 - Making jokes or comments which create a hostile or uncomfortable environment, such as someone being subject to sexual innuendo
- Direct Discrimination can also apply where there is an action against someone because they associate with someone who possesses a protected characteristic and also where there is a perception that someone possesses a particular characteristic.

- **Indirect Discrimination**

- This can occur when a requirement, policy or a condition is applied to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. This kind of discrimination is unlawful unless it can be justified.

- **Disability Discrimination**

- The Gatehouse is committed to providing Equal Opportunities to all employees, volunteers, students, applicants and Guests who have a disability, or have done

in the past.

- This means that people will not be less favourably treated in recruitment, selection, training or any other aspect of employment or use of The Gatehouse service as a result of disability, unless such treatment is justified within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. The organisation will attempt to make adjustments to accommodate disabled individuals where this is reasonably possible. The Gatehouse can only make such adjustments if it is informed by an individual of their disability, and The Gatehouse encourages all employees, volunteers, applicants and Guests to inform us of any disability or impairment.
- Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is any physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out their normal day-to-day activities which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.
- The Gatehouse understands that those people with a disability may wish for this to be considered more confidentially than with other issues. In these circumstances, they should raise it confidentially with the member of the senior management team who is responsible for their line management, or with the Project Director.

- **Harassment**

- Harassment or bullying is conduct which is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. This may occur either where the behaviour is aimed directly at the person, or where the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating work environment for the recipient. Harassment can also include bullying, which is also unacceptable. In some circumstances (in particular in relation to harassment on the grounds of sex, race or disability), the individual employee who breaches this may also be held personally liable at law.
- All employees have the right to a working environment which is free of harassment, either by word or by action. Any employee, volunteer, student or Guest who experiences such behaviour should:
 - First consider whether it is appropriate to make it clear to the person concerned that they find their behaviour offensive, and ask them not to act in that way. If preferred, a colleague can be asked to be present.
 - If the situation persists, they should use the Grievance Procedure or Complaints Policy as soon as possible and ask their immediate manager to investigate and resolve the complaint.
 - The Project Director and Assistant Project Director have special responsibility in this area. Whether or not you choose to use the Grievance Procedure/Complaints Policy, you are encouraged to contact a Senior Management for advice and assistance.

- **Recruitment and Selection Procedure**

- The Gatehouse aims to ensure that its inclusion, anti-discrimination and Equal Opportunities Policy applies to job applicants and the recruitment process, as well as to existing employees and to volunteers. The Gatehouse will:-
 - Make clear in all advertisements that it is an equal opportunities employer.
 - Endeavour to ensure that advertisements are placed in publications that are readily available to everybody, and that those advertisements avoid irrelevant material that might suggest that one group of applicants is preferred.

- Ensure that all staff involved in the interview and selection process are aware of and adhere to The Gatehouse Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Endeavour to ensure that everyone who applies for a job has a fair chance to describe or demonstrate their ability to do that job. Where it is necessary to assess personal circumstances, these will be discussed objectively and there will be no differentiation between applicants on any discriminatory grounds.
- Permit unsuccessful applicants the opportunity of discussing with those who conducted the interview the reasons why they were not selected.
- Inform successful applicants of The Gatehouse Equal Opportunities Policy during their induction.
- We aim to create and maintain excellent working relations where it is recognised that everybody is a valued member of the team.