



The Gatehouse Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Policy ID Number: P01

Policy Passed by Board of Trustees: January 2024 Valid until: January 2027

Introduction

The Gatehouse is a community drop-in centre offering free support services for adults who are; homeless, vulnerably housed, on low income and/or looking for company & community. The Gatehouse offers a free community centre with a cafe (six evenings a week), therapeutic and practical workshops, a shower and clothing service, a counselling service, one-to-one casework support and facilitates the Lived Experience Advisory Forum in partnership with Aspire and Oxfordshire Homeless Movement. For more information please see <https://oxfordgatehouse.org/>

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

1. The Gatehouse is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for staff, volunteers and Guests at the project. The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy. 'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. 'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at the Gatehouse and feels the worth of their contribution. 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences at the Gatehouse. We will actively support diversity and inclusion and ensure that everyone at the Gatehouse is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in the project to reach their potential.
 - 1.1. We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All staff, volunteers and Guests are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of the Gatehouse. Practice and policies in these areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.
 - 1.2. Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals at the Gatehouse as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and senior project workers, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Charity.
 - 1.3. Management will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no staff member or volunteer receiving less favorable treatment because of a

protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 which are race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin and caste), religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and age. In accordance with our overarching equal treatment ethos, we will also ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on account of their trade union membership or non-membership, or on the basis of being a part-time worker or fixed term employee. The Charity's objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

1.4. The Gatehouse will ensure that the policy is circulated to any staff, volunteers and trustees.

1.5. This policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

Management has the primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:

- not discriminating in the course of engagement against staff, job applicants, volunteers and Guests
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination
- bringing to the attention of our workforce that they may be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure, or other appropriate action, for unlawful discrimination of any kind

You can contribute by:

- not discriminating against fellow staff, customers, Guests, volunteers, or members of the public with whom you come into contact during the course of your duties
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination
- reporting any discriminatory action to your line manager

The successful achievement of these objectives necessitates a contribution from everyone and you have an obligation to report any act of discrimination known to you.

If you consider that you are a victim of unlawful discrimination you may raise the issue through the:

- Volunteer concerns and complaint procedure.
- Guest complaint procedure.
- The grievance procedure is in the employee handbook.

Positive Work Environment

2. The Gatehouse is committed to creating a harmonious and safe working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which every employee is treated with respect and dignity. The Gatehouse strives to ensure that the different experiences, abilities and skills of each individual are valued by others. Inappropriate behaviour should be challenged.

2.1. Harassment or bullying causes stress, anxiety and unhappiness to individuals, creates an unpleasant environment in which to work and may be unlawful. This can reduce efficiency and may ultimately have an impact on the way in which services are delivered to our Guests. For these reasons it is important that the Gatehouse, as an employer, ensures that staff and volunteers strive to achieve a working environment which is free from this type of behavior.

2.2. You may be an individual or part of a group that receives the unwanted attention. The harassment, bullying or victimisation may be a one-off incident or it may be a series of incidents. Your dignity at work can be affected by inappropriate behaviour, which causes offence, whether it is intentional, or not.

2.3. The Gatehouse is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and age or as a result of being subjected to any inappropriate behavior.

All staff, volunteers and Guests can expect to:

- be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy
- be able to work, free from unfair treatment, bullying, harassment or victimisation
- be valued for their skills, abilities and experiences

All employees are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with the content of this policy
- treat all colleagues, volunteers, Guests and donors with dignity, respect and courtesy
- contribute towards a positive working culture
- challenge or report unacceptable behaviour
- be mindful of others when expressing views
- cooperate with investigations into harassment and bullying

2.4. Breaches of this policy will be considered unacceptable behaviour and will be treated as misconduct, which may include gross misconduct warranting dismissal for a staff member. A volunteer may be asked to leave and a Guest banned from the project. Everyone must comply with this policy.

2.5. The Gatehouse is committed to dealing with any issues quickly, positively and confidentially when and if they occur. It is important to remember that while you may make comments outside of work, for example on social networking sites, the Gatehouse may use such evidence in investigations on bullying and harassment matters if it is brought to our attention.

Definition of harassment

3. Harassment is unwanted conduct, related to a relevant characteristic set out in the Equality Act 2010, that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. The protected characteristics are race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and age.

3.1. Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- verbal and written harassment (including via email) through jokes, teasing or banter, offensive language, gossip and slander, or letters
- sharing inappropriate images or videos
- using racist slang, phrases or nicknames
- isolation or non-cooperation, or exclusion from social activities
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following etc.

Staff and volunteers may also be subject to harassment from third parties such as Guests, donors and the general public etc. where interaction with those third parties is a part of their role.

Definition of bullying

4. Bullying is repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others as undermining the individual's right to dignity.

The following examples may constitute bullying:

- threats, abuse, teasing, gossip or practical jokes
- humiliation and ridicule either in private, at meetings or in front of others
- name calling, banter, insults, devaluing with reference to age or physical appearance
- setting impossible deadlines
- imposing excessive workloads
- making unjustified criticisms
- excessive monitoring
- removing responsibilities
- allocating menial or pointless tasks
- withholding information
- repeatedly refusing requests for leave, holiday or training

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it.

- 4.1. Everyone at the Gatehouse has a responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment that respects the dignity of everyone at the project. You should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which harassment and bullying can cause, and ensure that your behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be harassment or bullying. No one should practice or encourage such behaviour and should make it clear to all concerned that you find it unacceptable. You should also support colleagues if they are experiencing harassment or bullying and are considering making a complaint. You should alert a manager to any incidents to enable the Gatehouse to deal with the matter.
- 4.2. Managers and senior project workers have a responsibility to ensure that harassment or bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. They are committed to the elimination of bullying and harassment and must be vigilant in preventing acts wherever possible.
- 4.3. Managers and senior project workers also have a particular duty to set a proper example by treating everyone with dignity and respect and ensure that their behavior is beyond question.
- 4.4. Managers and senior project workers also have a responsibility to explain the Charity's policy to their staff and volunteers and take steps to promote it positively. They will be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes a complaint, provide full and clear guidance on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and ensure that there are no further problems or any victimisation after a complaint has been raised or resolved.
- 4.5. The Gatehouse will provide a copy of this policy to all staff, volunteers and trustees.

Procedure for dealing with alleged harassment or bullying

5. Complaints can be made both formally and informally. Whichever route you decide to take, (and the decision will always be yours) you will be offered guidance and assistance at every stage to help you resolve the problem as soon as possible and to stop the harassment.
- 5.1. If you are comfortable doing so, in the first instance, ask the person responsible to stop the behaviour, explaining that you feel uncomfortable in the way they are acting towards you. Speaking directly to the person at an early stage will often be sufficient to stop the behavior. If you feel unable to do this, you may be able to ask your line manager or a colleague to do this on your behalf.
- 5.2. If you decide to make a formal complaint you should do so through the most relevant procedure above, as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. You will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter will be investigated thoroughly. If the investigation reveals that your complaint is valid, prompt attention and action will be taken, designed to stop the behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence. In such circumstances, if relocation proves necessary, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser or bully rather than you as the victim, however, the Gatehouse will endeavour to relocate you if this is your preference.
- 5.3. You will be safeguarded from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. A mitigating risk plan will be devised alongside you and reviewed regularly.
- 5.4. Whilst this procedure is designed to assist genuine victims of harassment or bullying, you should be aware that if you raise complaints which are proven to be deliberately vexatious, you may become subject to proceedings under the disciplinary procedure, a volunteer could be asked to leave and a Guest banned from the project.

Procedure for dealing with alleged harassment or bullying by a third party

6. Any form of harassment towards you from third parties during your dealings with them will not be tolerated by the Gatehouse. We appreciate that a decision to report harassment from a third party may be difficult, particularly if the third party is a valuable Guest/donor or has a long-standing relationship with the Charity. However, we encourage you to report any instance of harassment from a third party so that the Gatehouse can take appropriate action.
- 6.1. You should follow the procedure set out above if you experience harassment from a third party, after which a meeting with you will be arranged and an investigation undertaken. Our action, where a complaint is substantiated, will depend on the circumstances of the case and may include:
 - Speaking with the harasser and warn them that any future occurrence of harassment will result in the Charity withdrawing provision of its services to the harasser.
 - Withdrawing the Charity's service provision from the harasser.
 - Speaking with the donor and we will explicitly ask for this conduct to stop and we may require that the harasser is removed from our donor list.
 - Reassigning the provision of the Charity's services of harasser to another employee.

Katrina Horne
CEO
January 2024

