The Gatehouse Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy ID Number: P01

Policy Passed by Board of Trustees: 9th September 2026 **Valid until:** 1st December 2027

Policy statement

The Gatehouse is committed to ensuring that, as far as is practicable, all employees, including, casual workers, interns and work placements, volunteers, job applicants, Guests and service users, prospective trustees and trustees and other people it works with are treated with respect and dignity, and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity 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 work and feels the worth of their contribution.
- 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce. 'Equity' means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

The charity will actively support equality, diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. The Gatehouse wants to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

A key objective of this policy is to provide a working environment in which current and potential employees feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated fairly and equally, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("protected characteristics" as per the Equality Act 2010) or indeed any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which the charity treats Guests, visitors, suppliers, partners, stakeholders and former colleagues.

The success of the organisation depends on the people the organisation works with. The charity recognises that an effective Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy will help everyone to develop to their full potential, which is clearly in the best interests of individuals and the charity.

The charity further recognises the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds, as this creates a workforce where creativity and valuing difference in others thrives. The Gatehouse values the wealth of experience within the community in which it operates and aspires to have a workforce that reflects this.

This policy covers all aspects of employment including advertisements, recruitment and selection, induction, pay, conditions of service, training and development, change management and grievance and disciplinary procedures.

This policy is not contractual but sets out the way in which the charity aims to manage equality and address diversity in the workplace. The charity reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate it at any time.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all employees as well as volunteers and casual and agency workers (referred to collectively as "workers" for the purposes of this policy, where relevant) and to trustees.

Legal considerations

The main legislation that covers equal opportunities and discrimination is the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the following should be taken into consideration:

- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013
- any Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission

plus any amendments to the above legislation.

Definitions

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects aspects of our identity known as 'protected characteristics' from discrimination. The nine protected characteristics are:

• Age • Disability • Gender reassignment • Marriage and civil partnership
• Pregnancy and maternity • Race • Religion or belief • Sex • Sexual orientation

Discrimination by or against a worker is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exception. Discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally, and can take different forms, for example:

- **direct discrimination:** treating an individual with one or more of the protected characteristics less favourably than others
- **indirect discrimination:** where provisions, criterion or practice e.g. policies, procedures or practices, which are applied to everyone, or groups of people, but have, or will have, the effect of putting those who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared to others
- **harassment:** where unwanted conduct linked to a protected characteristic violates an individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them
- **victimisation:** treating a person less favourably because they have committed a "protected act". "Protected acts" include making or supporting an allegation of discrimination, or giving evidence relating to an allegation of discrimination, or raising a grievance about equality or discrimination.
- **discrimination by association:** where an individual is discriminated against because they associate with someone, e.g., a family member, who possesses a protected characteristic
- **discrimination by perception:** where an individual is perceived as having a protected characteristic, irrespective of whether or not this perception is correct

On all occasions where those with managerial responsibility for workers are required to make decisions between them, for example disciplinary matters, selection for training, promotion, pay increases, redundancy etc it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament are considered as objectively as possible.

Responsibility for this policy

The overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy rests with the CEO.

All managers have a crucial role to play in promoting equality of opportunity in their own areas of responsibility. As employers the charity is liable for the actions of its workers, and therefore managers are responsible for this policy's successful implementation and should take steps to ensure their team understand and follow this policy.

All workers, irrespective of their job or seniority, should familiarise themselves with this policy and be aware of their own responsibility and role in promoting equality of opportunity and in not discriminating against or harassing colleagues, job applicants or ex-workers, nor encouraging others to do so or tolerating such behaviour. Any worker who witnesses

behaviour or decisions that seem contrary to this policy, or experience it directly, are encouraged to challenge these or raise the issues with their manager.

Workers should be aware that not only is their employer liable for any cases of discrimination or harassment that occur, but individuals also may be held personally liable for their own acts and behaviour.

Aims of this policy

Our aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation or discrimination in any form that may affect the dignity of an individual.

Whilst the charity fully accept all of its responsibilities under the current legislation outlined above, The Gatehouse also aims to go beyond the confines of the law to provide equality of opportunity for all. The Gatehouse aims to:

- recognise that everyone has a right to their distinctive and diverse identities
- ensure that all workers and potential workers are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment
- understand how diversity can improve our ability to provide better services, and therefore have a workforce which generally reflects the Guests the charity serves
- provide services which are responsive to the needs of our Guests
- provide all workers with the necessary support, training and development they need to contribute to the organisation's objectives and goals
- provide a supportive, open environment where all workers may use their talents fully, and where workers and Guests are treated fairly and with dignity and respect, in an environment free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour.

Learning to work with people's differences, visible or not, enables everybody to all work together effectively and helps the organisation to anticipate and meet the needs of all of its Guests; recruit, retain and develop the best people; act responsibly in the communities of which the organisation is part of and also fulfil its legal commitments.

The working environment

The charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our working environment enables people to take up positions for which they are suitably qualified. This may include physical adaptations or more flexible ways of working (where appropriate and practical).

Terms and conditions of employment

The charity's employment policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, amend or adapt current practices to promote equality of opportunity within the charity, and to remove barriers experienced by members of disadvantaged social groups in seeking employment with and working with it.

The charity will ensure that all of our employment policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination. Length of service as a qualifying criterion for benefits will not be used unless clearly justifiable.

Employees will not be subjected to any detriment if they wish to join our pension scheme, nor will they be offered any inducement not to do so.

Recruitment and selection

The charity aims, through appropriate information, training and supervision, to ensure that all employees and trustees who are responsible for recruitment and selection are familiar with this policy.

The charity aims to ensure that our recruitment practices are free from unlawful discrimination. Our normal recruitment and selection processes will be adjusted where necessary to ensure applicants with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

Job adverts will normally state: "the charity is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity, welcoming those especially with lived experience of homelessness".

Job descriptions and person specifications will be reviewed to ensure that criteria are not applied which are either directly or indirectly discriminatory and that they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post. Shortlisting and interviewing will normally be carried out by more than one person, to minimise the risk of conscious or unconscious bias.

Selection will, as far as possible, be conducted on an objective basis and will focus on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements. Our interest is in the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and the potential of individuals to do the job.

Questions asked of candidates will relate to information that will help assess their ability to do the job. Questions about marriage plans, family intentions, religious or political beliefs, caring responsibilities, intention to join our pension scheme or to opt out, or about any other issues which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination should not be asked.

Selection tests will be specifically related to the job, measuring an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.

Training and development

The charity recognises that our ability to meet the diverse needs of our Guests is improved by having a workforce which has the skills and understanding to achieve our objectives. All workers will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their manager. The charity is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, all workers receive the widest possible range of development opportunities for advancement in line with the needs of the charity.

Induction training will include awareness of our Equality and Diversity Policy, and how it applies to individuals.

The provision of training will be reviewed to ensure that provisions are made where necessary to enable part-time workers.

Flexibility

The charity recognises the benefits of helping our workers to balance the responsibilities of their work and private life. The charity will consider any requests for flexible working in a way which aims to balance the needs of the individual and our organisation.

Disability

The charity aims to provide a safe working environment for workers with disabilities. The charity will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and/or working arrangements for people with disabilities where they cause disadvantage to the person.

If, due to changing circumstances, an employee with disabilities is unable to carry out their existing duties, every effort will be made to find suitable alternative employment within the organisation, and retraining will be provided as necessary.

Where an employee without disabilities becomes disabled during their employment, The charity will make every effort to facilitate continued employment in their existing job. Where this is not possible, suitable alternative employment will be considered, and The organisation may provide training and support as required.

Whilst The charity will make every effort to retain employees in these circumstances, The Gatehouse cannot make any guarantees about continued employment.

Grievances, disputes and disciplinary procedure

Employees who believe they have been discriminated against should bring this to our attention as soon as possible. In the first instance, employees are encouraged to do this informally, but where it has not been possible to resolve this informally, or where the matter is particularly serious, they are advised to use our internal Grievance Procedure. An employee who brings a genuine complaint of discrimination must not be victimised or less favourably treated as a result. However, allegations made for malicious reasons or in pursuit of a personal grudge will be managed under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Harassment (behaviour that is offensive, frightening or in any way distressing) or bullying will not be tolerated, and any individual who feels that they have been subjected to harassment or bullying should refer to our Bullying and Harassment Policy. Equally, anyone who witnesses incidents of harassment or bullying should report this to their manager or an appropriate senior member of staff.

When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken where employees who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic are not dismissed or disciplined for performance, conduct or behaviour which might be overlooked or condoned in other employees.

References

The charity will not discriminate against individuals who have left the charity by providing references that are not based on factual information.

Retirement

The Gatehouse has no fixed retirement age and employees who wish to work beyond State Pension Age may choose to do so.

Involvement

The charity will take appropriate steps to encourage the participation of all workers to ensure that, wherever possible, our employment practices recognise and meet their needs. The charity will involve our workers in determining what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work.

Service provision

The charity aims to make our services as accessible and responsive as possible to all existing and potential Guests and to provide a service to them which recognises and respects their differences. The charity recognises that our ability to meet their needs is improved by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects our Guests.

Anyone who feels they have been denied equality of opportunity whilst in receipt of our services will be encouraged to make their complaint in writing so that their concerns can be investigated and responded to. Workers are expected to make our Guests aware of their rights and responsibilities with regards to equality of opportunity and should be referred to our Complaints Policy for further information.

The charity reserves the right to withdraw our services from any Guest if that individual behaves in a discriminatory, disruptive or abusive manner to any worker, trustee or other person.

The charity is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will make every effort to ensure that our services and communications are accessible to people with

special requirements, including those with visual, audio, cognitive and/or physical impairments, and those who are unable to communicate effectively in English.

External agencies

In order to ensure that the charity follows best practice and keep ourselves up to date, the charity will liaise with appropriate external organisations to help develop a policy of continuous improvement.

Communication of this policy

All workers will be made aware of this policy on joining the organisation.

In addition, workers will be reminded of the policy through such means as emails, notifications on Breathehr, training courses and internal communications].

Data Protection

Relevant data will be collected to support this policy. the charity treats personal data collected by workers or applicants for the purposes of equal opportunity monitoring in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing personal data is provided in our Privacy Notices.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with our Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will take effect from [October 2025]. The CEO has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

The charity will monitor its progress towards diversity by doing the following:

- monitoring the ethnic, gender, age and disability profile of our employees to enable us to understand the composition of our workforce in order to identify any areas of inequality
- monitoring applicants for jobs, training and development, grievances, disciplinary hearings, dismissals and other reasons for leaving
- monitoring employee opinions and comments though feedback via the performance review system
- performance monitoring through feedback, surveys and proper investigation of any complaints

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to your line manager.