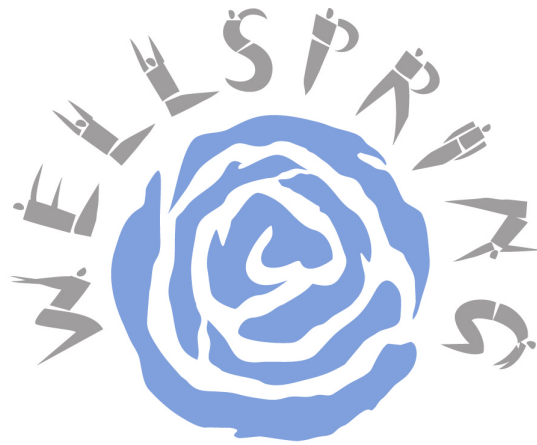


Wellspring Healthy Living Centre (WHLC Ltd)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



Healthy Living Centre

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I. The Company's Statement of Intent

The Company is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and in the services it provides to the community. The Company will ensure that this policy is implemented, monitored and evaluated.

The Company will follow the recommendations of The Equality and Human Rights Commission's statutory *Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Employment* in all its employment policies, procedures and practices.

The Company will fulfil its legal obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended 2004), Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended 2000), the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Sexuality) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and other European Union Employment Directives, such as that covering age.

2. The Company's Equal Opportunity Statement

2.1 'The Company is committed to promoting equality of opportunity both as an employer and through delivery of its local services.'

2.2 The Company is striving towards being an Equal Opportunity employer and will seek to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of their gender, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, caring responsibilities, regional or national origins, age, marital status, trade union activity, political or religious belief, class or sexual orientation.

2.2.1 The policy will be a priority for the organisation.

2.2.2 The Centre Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy.

2.2.3 The policy will be communicated to all stakeholders and potential job applicants.

2.2.4 All stakeholders will be made aware of the policy, their rights and responsibilities under the policy, and on how the policy will affect the way they carry out their duties or activities within the Company. No one will be in any doubt about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct in the Company.

2.3 The Company recognises that discrimination may be direct or indirect and aims to ensure that this policy covers both.

2.4 Direct Discrimination consists of treating a person less favourably than others on the grounds of their gender, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, caring responsibilities, regional or national origins, age, marital status, trade union activity, political or religious belief, class or sexual orientation.

2.5 Indirect Discrimination consists of applying in any circumstances a requirement or conditions that, intentionally or not, has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group.

2.6 The Company is committed to providing appropriate and relevant training in equal opportunities for staff, residents and volunteers involved in the delivery of services.

2.7 An obligation to abide by the Equal Opportunities Code of Practice will be a contractual requirement of all members of staff and volunteers within the Company.

It is the responsibility of every individual member of staff, Board Trustee and volunteers to ensure

that this policy is applied in practice, both in employment and in the delivery of services. The responsibility to abide by the Company's Equal Opportunities Policy will be included in every job description and added to the contract of employment.

3. People, Funding & Delivery

3.1 The Company is committed to promoting equality of opportunity through its delivery of local services. The Company will promote equality of opportunity with all its stakeholders through the following principles:

- 3.1.1 Valuing and respecting diversity: all residents are given the opportunity to be involved in and benefit from Wellspring services.
- 3.1.2 Actively seeking the views of residents currently under represented within the decision making structures within the Company.
- 3.1.3 Promoting harmony between different communities of interest and challenging all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- 3.1.4 Everyone resident in the area has a right to be heard by and involved in the centre irrespective of gender, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, caring responsibilities, regional or national origins, age, marital status, trade union activity, political or religious belief, class or sexual orientation.

3.2 The Company will promote equality of opportunity in its role as a deliverer of services and projects by:

- 3.2.1 The Company will endeavour to ensure that steering groups etc reflect the diversity of the area
- 3.2.2 Ensuring the Company's activities seek to address the service needs of the diverse community through service targeting and utilising the Company's equalities monitoring form.

4. Monitoring And Review Of The Equal Opportunities Policy

The Company will review and monitor the implementation of the policy and take action as necessary. The Board of Trustees will have overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the policy.

5. Recruitment Procedure

5.1. Job description and person specification

- 5.1.1 Every post must have a job description and person specification. These should always be reviewed before recruitment by the Centre Manager in consultation with the appropriate manager to ensure continuing relevance and compliance with the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 5.1.2 The contents of the job descriptions and person specifications must be strictly relevant to the requirements of the job and not discriminatory against those groups referred to in this policy. Job Descriptions will state that the post holder is required to observe the Company's policies: Equal opportunities, Health and Safety etc. The requirements of a person specification must be capable of being tested.

5.1.3 When experience and/or academic qualifications are criteria for selection, these will be geared to the requirements of the job and will not be artificially high.

5.1.4 All jobs will be considered for job sharing and/or part time work unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would be inappropriate or impractical.

5.2 Advertising

5.2.1 The primary aim of advertisements is to attract people to seek further information about the job. They should be designed to appeal to as wide a spectrum as possible of those likely to meet the person specification.

5.2.2 Details of all posts must be advertised in writing both internally and externally (at times of re-organisation and in the interests of re-deploying existing staff, it may be desirable exceptionally to allow for internal advertisement only at the outset). Vacancies will be advertised through means that will give equal access to all sections of the community seeking employment. They must not be advertised in such a way that a particular group is unlikely to see the advertisement. Particular consideration will be given to advertising in ways that will reach the groups identified in this policy.

5.2.3 Where there is under-representation of a minority group/s, consideration should be given to positive encouragement to persons of that group to apply for appointment. For example, reviewing the Company's advertising outlets. As with all vacancies, selection must be solely on the merits and qualifications of the applicants.

5.3 Advertisement

5.3.1 All advertisements must be clear and unambiguous to ensure that all potential candidates will be able to determine their own suitability for the job. Advertisements should make clear the basic requirements and qualifications for the job and should highlight those features that are essential. Care should be taken not to exclude or unwittingly imply the exclusion of particular groups.

5.3.2 Staff handling applicant enquiries must ensure that they deal with all enquiries in an even-handed manner and that they do not deter would-be applicants. Where advertisements state '*for further information please contact ...*', this should be strictly limited to providing candidates with factual information concerning qualifications/experience in accordance with the person specification. This process must not be used as an unofficial screening.

5.3.3 All posts suitable for job sharing and/or part time work will be advertised accordingly.

5.3.4 When details are sent to potential applicants, these will include details of the selection process and guidance on filling in the application form. A copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy will also be sent.

5.3.5 All advertisements must state that '*The Company is seeking to become an Equal Opportunities Employer*'.

5.4 Selection

The practices for selection must be consistent throughout, and the Company will ensure that at least one member of the recruiting panel have received training in recruitment selection and equal opportunities.

5.5 Short listing

- 5.5.1 Short listing must be based only on information contained in the application form using the stipulations of the job description and person specification as the criteria. For this reason, every internal applicant must fully complete an application form. The criteria for any initial selection must be objective and consistently applied to all applicants.
- 5.5.2 A record will be kept and signed of the criteria used in the short-listing process and the application of the criteria to each candidate for incorporation into the recruitment monitoring process and for feedback to candidates if required.

5.6 Selection Tests

Such tests, where used, must be appropriate to the job requirement and must measure an individual's actual and/or potential ability to carry out the duties of the post as outlined in the job description.

5.7 Interviewing

- 5.7.1 All interviews must be conducted by at least three individuals. Wherever possible, the same interviewing panel will be used for a given round of interviews. If a member of the panel is unavailable for subsequent rounds of interviews, the Chair of the panel or the Company Support Officer will seek a third panel member to join the panel.
- 5.7.2 Whilst equal treatment for all does not necessarily mean the same treatment for all, the content of questions and interviews should be agreed in advance by those involved and should relate to the person specification and job description. Each interview for a particular post should be broadly similar in form and content so as to ensure a consistent approach to all candidates.
- 5.7.3 Every interviewer should keep their written record of the interviewing and selection process. This should be incorporated into the records for use in the recruitment process. The person chairing will sign a record of the reasons for selecting or rejecting candidates.
- 5.7.4 In determining whether to reject a candidate, interviewers must consider only factors relevant to the job. The criteria applied to the interview must be those listed in the job description and the person specification. Fluency in English should not be used as a selection criterion unless this is a genuine requirement of the job as outlined in the person specification. Interviewers must not ask questions about personal circumstances unrelated to the requirements of the job.
- 5.7.5 All successful disabled candidates will be offered advice and support via the Centre Manager regarding aids to employment and physical adaptations to the candidates anticipated employment base.
- 5.7.6 Selection decisions must not be influenced by negative images of the applicants on grounds of gender, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, caring responsibilities, regional or national origins, age, marital status, trade union activity, political or religious belief, class or sexual orientation or by any actual or perceived unwillingness by others to work with members of any group.
- 5.7.8 If any member of an interviewing panel feels that discrimination has occurred in the selection process, the matter should be recorded and reported immediately to the Centre Manager and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustee. No selection decision will be made until the Centre Manager and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustees have investigated and resolved the issue.

5.8 Appointment

Every new member of staff must be made aware during their induction into the Company of the Company's Equal Opportunities Policy, of the application of the policy and of that person's role in carrying out the policy, as stipulated in the person's job description.

5.9 Conditions of Service

As part of their commitment to equal opportunities, the Company will regularly review their conditions of employment in line with employment legislation.

5.10 Grievance, disciplinary and complaints procedure

- 5.10.1 Employees who feel they have been subjected to unfair treatment, harassment, bullying or discrimination contrary to the Company's equal opportunities policy may raise the matter with their line manager in the first instance, or if this is inappropriate, the Centre Manager.
- 5.10.2 No member of staff should have to suffer discrimination, harassment, abuse or bullying from other members of staff. All complaints of discrimination, abuse, harassment, or bullying will be treated seriously and investigated within five working days of receipt of the complaint. Such activities will be dealt with as misconduct under the Company's disciplinary procedures. Anyone feeling that a complaint has not been properly acted upon is entitled to pursue the Grievance Procedure.
- 5.10.3 Any member of the public who believes the Company has treated them unfairly, has the opportunity to make a formal complaint to the Company via the company's Complaints Procedure

6. Service Delivery Procedures

The Company recognises the need to take measures to ensure that disadvantaged groups and individuals can become aware of and make the best use of services and activities offered by the Company.

7. Access to the Company's services activities

7.1 Information to members of the public

- 7.1.1 The Company will ensure that all publicity materials and booklets are accessible, as far as is practicable, to those who are not fluent in English or those who are visually impaired or those who have difficulty with reading.
- 7.1.2 All available major publicity material will include a statement outlining the Company's policy statement on equal opportunities.
- 7.1.3 The Company will aim to ensure that all their literature uses language and illustrations which are non discriminatory and which present positive images of and to disadvantaged groups.

7.2 Physical

Health & Safety responsible officers will carry out an annual audit of all new and existing company premises to ensure they are accessible to every employee, trustee, volunteer and local resident.

7.3 Training

- 7.3.1 The Company is committed to providing training for all staff so that the Equal Opportunities Policy in its entirety is understood and implemented in the Company's recruitment practice and staff development.
- 7.3.2 All staff will have the opportunity to assess their training needs with regard to implementing this policy. This will be agreed with their line manager and incorporated into the staff member's Performance Appraisal.

8. Monitoring

8.2. Monitoring Recruitment Procedures

To achieve our aims, the Centre Manager will ensure that:

- 8.2.1 All job applicants receive an Equal Opportunities Recruitment Monitoring Form. This information will be collected anonymously. Under no circumstances will it be made available to anyone involved in the selection process, until the appointment has been made.

8.2.2 A recruitment file for each appointment is maintained. This will contain all application forms, notes made during the short listing and interview process, reasons for rejection and/or short listing of each applicant, and the Equal Opportunities Recruitment Monitoring Forms. These will be kept for at least 6 months after the appointment has been made.

8.2.3 Representations from individuals or groups about the operation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and possible improvements will be considered.

8.3 Monitoring Service Delivery

8.3.1 The Company will monitor the performance of Wellspring in its effectiveness in meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups. This process will involve all projects completing the Company's 'Equalities Monitoring Form'.

8.3.2 The Company will consult with appropriate agencies on ways of improving the visibility and accessibility of the service to targeted groups. These agencies may also help the Company to identify discrimination in Trust procedures / criteria and suggest suitable corrective action.

8.3.4 Overall responsibility for the effectiveness of this policy lies with the Board of Trustees.

8.3.5 All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy. Managers must also make sure their workers know about, and follow, the policy.

9. List of Equalities legislation and codes of practice

Disability

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

Disability Rights Commission Act 1999

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Gender & Sexuality

Equal Pay Act 1970

Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975

Equal Pay Regulations 1983

Sex Discrimination Act 1986

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Race & Religion

Race Relations Act 1976

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Race Relations (Amendment) Regulation 2003

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Parents and Carers

Maternity and Parental Leave etc Regulations 1999

Employment Act 2002 (Flexible Working Regulations)

Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

Other Legislation

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Human Rights Act 1998

Equality Act 2006

Codes of practice

Disability Rights Commission

The elimination of discrimination in the field of employment (1999)

Duties of trade organisations to their members and applicants (1999)

Rights of access, goods, facilities, services and premises (1999)

Access to goods, facilities and services: regulatory impact assessment (1999)

Duty on trade organisations to make reasonable adjustments regulatory impact assessment (1999)

Equal Opportunities Commission

Code of practice on sex discrimination (1985)

Code of practice on equal pay (1997)

Commission for Racial Equality

Code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment (1984)

Code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination in education England and Wales (1989)

Code of practice in rented housing (1991)

Code of practice in non-rented (owner occupied) housing (1992)

Code of practice in primary health care services (1992)

Code of practice in maternity services (1994)