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Equality and Diversity Policy

Jessie's Fund believes that all people should be treated fairly and as equals. We recognise that people are not the same and we respect and value these differences. In our work, we actively try to challenge attitudes, feelings and actions that cause people to feel unfairly treated. We work to promote a happy and fair working environment within the organisation and life-enhancing experience to those who receive our services.

Jessie's Fund is committed to:

- Encouraging equality and diversity within the organisation, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- Making the organisation representative of all sections of society, and to ensuring each employee feels respected and is able to give of their best. For the purposes of this policy the term "employee" is understood to include those working for the organisation in a freelance capacity.
- Avoiding unlawful discrimination of service users or the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- Promote equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, or freelance.
- To identify how unlawful discrimination might arise under the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
- Ensure the organisation opposes and avoids all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes the areas of pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

The organisation commits to:

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and ensuring individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, service users, suppliers and the public.

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, service users, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal, or termination of freelance contract without notice.
Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
Decisions concerning staff will be based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the Equality and Diversity policy.
Monitoring will also include assessing how the Anti-Discrimination Policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Reviewed by the Board of TrusteesJuly 2024.....

Next review by the Board of TrusteesJuly 2027.....

Related Policies:

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy