

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Introduction

The Board of Medway Foodbank believes that all people are created equal in the sight of God, and seeks to promote all the foodbank's activities in ways which recognise and encourage that principle.

The foodbank is committed to encouraging and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, including recruitment, selection, and training.

We believe everyone has the right to be part of our team and we will always seek to encourage and recruit people from wide and varied backgrounds. Where possible we will make suitable adaptations to our processes and procedures to facilitate this.

We are committed to non-discriminatory procedures and practices across all our activities, and everyone will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (these are protected characteristics).

### Discrimination

We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying, or harassment on any grounds. This includes physical, verbal, or psychological discrimination, either face to face or online.

**Direct discrimination:** treating someone differently or worse than someone else based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

**Indirect discrimination:** when a practice, policy, or rule applies to everyone in the same way but, due to a protected characteristic, it has a worse effect on some people than others, putting them at a particular disadvantage.

**Disability discrimination:** the failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

**Bullying or harassment:** unwanted conduct or behaviour that makes someone feel that their dignity has been violated or that an offensive, intimidating, hostile, degrading, or humiliating environment has been created.

**Victimisation:** treating someone badly or putting them at a disadvantage because they have complained about discrimination or have helped someone who has been the victim of discrimination.

The foodbank commits to:

- encouraging equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its activities
- promoting dignity and respect for all
- recognising individual differences and valuing the contributions of everyone
- training managers of volunteers and staff and all volunteers and staff about their rights and responsibilities within this policy
- creating an environment free of discrimination
- taking seriously complaints of discrimination
- reviewing and updating policies, practices, and procedures to ensure fairness and take account of changes in the law
- ensuring equality monitoring is in place
- regularly reviewing the implementation of this policy and making changes as necessary

## **Recruitment practice**

Medway Foodbank will support equal opportunity practice across all elements of employment/volunteer recruitment, as follows:

- Recruitment and 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, experience, aptitude and the potential of individuals to do the job.
- Job opportunities and training will be communicated and made available to everyone on a fair and equal basis.
- We will ensure that all of our policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied without regard to a protected characteristic or indeed any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination.
- Employees will not be subjected to any detriment if they wish to join our pension scheme, nor offered any inducement not to join our scheme.
- We will consider any requests for flexible working in a way which aims to balance the needs of the individual and Medway Foodbank.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and/or working arrangements for people with disabilities where they cause disadvantage to the person.
- Harassment or bullying will not be tolerated, and any individual who feels they have been subjected to harassment or bullying should report this to their manager or an appropriate senior member of staff. Equally, anyone who witnesses incidents of harassment or bullying should report this.
- When dealing with disciplinary matters, care will be taken that employees/volunteers who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in others.
- We will not discriminate against individuals who have left our organisation by providing references that are not based on facts nor fail to provide one based on a protected characteristic.
- We have no fixed retirement age and anyone who wishes to work beyond state pension age may choose to do so.

## **Service delivery**

We aim to make our services as accessible and responsive as possible to all existing and potential service users and to provide a service to them which recognises and respects their differences.

We undertake to listen to our service users and involve them in the development of services which respect and value their diversity.

We reserve the right to withdraw our services to any service user if that individual behaves in a discriminatory, disruptive or abusive manner to any worker, trustee or other person.

## **Responsibility of this Policy**

Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy is the responsibility of everyone. The overall strategy, administration, and general application of the policy throughout the charity is the responsibility of the Chair of Trustees. Anyone who witnesses or experiences behaviour or decisions that seem contrary to this policy, is encouraged to challenge this, or raise the issues with their main contact / manager.

## **Breaches of this Policy**

Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and will be investigated using our problem-solving procedures for volunteers and disciplinary process for staff. Serious breaches, including gross misconduct, could lead to dismissal.

Agreed by trustees: March 2025

Review Date: March 2026

Reviewed by Trussell: July 2024