



Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

The Joshua Tree is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believes that this prevents potential / ability from being realised in young people and others. This policy works in conjunction with the Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

Policy

The Joshua Tree will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Race;
- Colour;
- Gender;
- Sexual orientation or identity;
- Ethnic or national origin;
- Disability, mental health condition, health condition or long term injury;
- Partnership status or home responsibility;
- HIV or AIDS status;
- Age;
- Political or religious belief;
- Trade union activity;
- Socio-economic background;
- Refugee or asylum seeker status;

As a provider of a service to the community, The Joshua Tree accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This policy sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

The Joshua Tree recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with The Joshua Tree Equal Opportunities Policy. The Joshua Tree will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach



will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.

The Joshua Tree realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- The Joshua Tree will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of human resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures. This will be achieved by following The Joshua Tree Equal Opportunities Policy;

Responsibility

The Trustees of The Joshua Tree have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all staff, sessional workers, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with The Joshua Tree to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

The Joshua Tree will bring to the attention of all staff, volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

If any staff member, sessional worker, service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the Trustees.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

Disabled Access

The Joshua Tree will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

Use of Language

Volunteers, staff, sessional workers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, that belittles anyone.



Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

All materials used or developed by The Joshua Tree will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

Sexual Harassment

No staff member, sessional worker, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse;
- physical contact;
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive.

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

This policy was reviewed: July 2021

Next review is due: July 2023