

Equality and Diversity Policy

Healthwatch Bedford Borough Community Interest Company (HBBCIC) is committed to valuing diversity and seeks to provide all staff with the opportunity for employment, career and personal development on the basis of ability, qualifications and suitability for the work as well as their potential to be developed into the job.

We believe that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas, thinking and approaches which make the way work is undertaken more effective and efficient.

HBBCIC will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination against any person on grounds of age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation whether in the field of recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, career progression, training, transfer or dismissal.

It is also the responsibility of all staff in their daily actions, decisions and behaviour to endeavour to promote these concepts, to comply with all relevant legislation and to ensure that they do not discriminate against colleagues, customers, suppliers or any other person associated with HBBCIC.

The principles adopted by HBBCIC are that it will:

- not tolerate acts that breach this policy and all such breaches or alleged breaches will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action where appropriate.
- fully recognise its legal obligations under all relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- allow staff to pursue any matter through the internal procedures which they believe has exposed them to inequitable treatment within the scope of this policy. If you need to access these procedures they can be obtained from your line manager e.g. Grievance Procedure, Dignity at Work Procedure etc.
- ensure that all managers understand and maintain their responsibilities and those of their team under this policy.
- offer opportunities for flexible working patterns, wherever operationally feasible, to help employees to combine a career with their domestic responsibilities.
- provide equal opportunity to all who apply for vacancies through open competition.
- select candidates only on the basis of their ability to carry out the job, using a clear and open process.

- provide all employees with the training and development that they need to carry out their job effectively.
- provide all reasonable assistance to employees who are or who become disabled, making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to provide continued employment. We will ensure an appropriate risk assessment is carried out and that appropriate specialist advice is obtained when necessary.

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