



Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

Equality and Diversity is key to how West Cornwall Women's Aid (WCWA) operates and is central in our approach to the provision of services for women and children. We are more than ever responsible for working with partners to draw up community strategies to improve social, economic and environmental well being of our community. Central to this is WCWA's:

Commitment to consulting local communities to both identify their needs and redesign our service in accordance with those needs, especially those who have traditionally suffered from disadvantage and discrimination.

Recognition that fairness is paramount to the principle of equal opportunity and diversity, which means we will develop policies that tackle inequalities, aiming to ensure all employees are treated fairly and that service users do not experience discrimination.

Recognition that events such as the Stephen Lawrence enquiry has shown that discrimination can be institutional requiring constant vigilance to ensure that public bodies operate in a fair and responsible manner bearing in mind the needs of the community as a whole.

Commitment to learn from such experiences and maintain an on going commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.

Recognition that people may have disabilities that are not immediately apparent and that this can create the additional challenge of others failing to identify and acknowledge the disability.

The legislative framework we work to:

Equality Act 2010 (part 1 schedule 9)

This Act focuses on the rights of those with protected characteristics – age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity.

We will promote awareness of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, associative discrimination and perceptive discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees.



As an Employer

We recognise the importance of following good employment practices and aim to have a workforce reflective of the community we serve. In order to achieve a more representative work force we will monitor the composition of the work force, and promote proportionate representation through the recruitment process. We will also promote staff awareness of equality and diversity issues through induction programmes and Cornwall Council training programme.

WCWA is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity, and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. We will ensure a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity across all areas throughout the employment relationship from recruitment to termination and references.

As a Service Provider

WCWA recognises that women, children and young people may have differing needs because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, or responsibility for dependants, HIV/Aids status and is committed to providing equality of access and provision in all our services. WCWA will treat all users of our service with dignity and respect and will ensure that they access services without unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

We will continue to work to provide high quality services that are appropriate and accessible to all sections of the community, to do this we will:

- Undertake appropriate consultation with service users, providers and stakeholders
- Monitor our Complaints Procedure and ensure that it is easily accessible.
- In our service plan monitor the take up of services
- Adjust the way we work to redress any imbalance in the take up of services
- Ensure, where necessary, translation and interpretation services are made available
- Endeavour to provide WCWA documents in accessible formats

Partnership

WCWA will work actively and positively in partnership with other agencies to ensure that information, support and accommodation services can be provided equitably to meet the diverse needs of women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

Policy review

We will review the Equality and Diversity Policy at least every three years to ensure it remains up to date and relevant.



Resources

WCWA is an equality employer and will give this policy the highest priority and, if necessary, will seek to obtain additional resources for improving equality practices.

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Review date October 2025*





Addendum to Equal Opportunities and Diversity Employment Policy Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Purpose

West Cornwall Womens Aid (WCWA) is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and undertakes to treat all applicants for paid and voluntary work fairly; and not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. This is subject to the over-riding consideration of protecting children and vulnerable women.

Scope

All applicants for paid or voluntary work are subject to Disclosure.

Statement

AGE UK CIOS processes all applications for WCWA to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). WCWA renews DBS checks on all staff, paid and unpaid, every 3 years; the online registration service is now being operated.

All applicants are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record on the equal opportunities monitoring form provided with the application form. The form indicates that successful applicants will be subject to Disclosure. The information provided on the monitoring form is only seen by relevant staff undertaking evaluation of the forms. Staff involved in this recruitment process are able to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences and the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position. Such discussion will be open and measured and will only concern offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position offered, whether paid or voluntary.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar applicants from working with us. We will always give due consideration to the nature of the work, the circumstances and background to the offences. However we must always be mindful of our responsibilities to protect children and vulnerable women.

Note: This addendum should be read in conjunction with WCWA's Equality and Diversity Policy.

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