



## **Alt Valley Community Trust**

### **Equality, Diversity and Multiculturalism Policy**

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#### **Introduction**

This policy statement outlines the philosophy and expectations for equality, diversity and multiculturalism shared values of Alt Valley Community Trust, ensuring equality for all who work and are part of our services including, learners, associates and the wider community. AVCT will work to communicate our expectations and shared ethos through the following:

- Developing an ethos that values and respects all people.
- Actively promoting the equality of opportunity.
- Preparing all learners/participants for life inside a diverse society.
- Fostering good relations amongst our staff and services users, the community and the wider communities with which we work.
- Eliminating all forms of unfair discrimination, harassment, and other oppressive behaviour, using Disciplinary Procedures when appropriate.
- Delivering diversity and equality through our policies, practice, and procedures.
- Using all available resources to eliminate barriers which could discourage or limit access to activities and provision.
- Taking positive action to offer support and encouragement to groups and individuals whose progress could be limited by cultural expectations and stereotypes.
- Monitoring the implementation of equality and diversity throughout the organisation.
- Setting targets for improvement and evaluating the impact of equality and diversity action on achieving the goals of the organisation.

#### **Who is the policy for?**

All staff, learners/participants, and other associates/stakeholders.

#### **Policy statement**

This document describes the minimum standards and guidance relating to developing a cooperative and non-discriminatory environment which is both supportive and challenging and dealing with instances of harassment, bullying and discrimination. At Alt Valley Community Trust we believe that all staff and learners/participants must be equally and mutually respected and treated as individuals, taking positive account of age, gender, religion or belief, ethnic origin, cultural origin, sexual preferences, disability, pregnancy or maternity

and marital status. We will constantly implement to apply this principle to all our policies, procedures, delivery and interactions across the projects.

AVCT promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well, for all of staff, learners/participants so that a strong ethos and culture prevent any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, managers and staff and do not tolerate prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour.

Staff are trained on equality and diversity issues, through on-line training and internal training. The E&D policy and procedures are shared with new members of staff and annual updates shared through our staff intranet. All of AVCT staff are quick to challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory or offensive language. Resources and assessment strategies reflect and value the diversity of our organisation and provide people with the reassurance of 'opportunity for all'.

AVCTs culture actively promotes all aspects of staff and learner needs and wants in the pursuit of inclusion and open access to opportunity. People understand how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations and settings. They trust leaders and managers to take rapid and appropriate action to resolve any concerns that may arise.

AVCT will ensure that those with whom we work are aware of our commitment to Equality and Diversity and our expectations will reflect this ethos when working in partnership.

### **Protected characteristics**

The following characteristics are protected under the 2010 Act

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Transgender, Marital Status

Not unlawfully discriminate because of 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 and sexual orientation.

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*Reference:*

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Employment, Equality Sexual Orientation Regulations Dec 2003

Equality Act (2010)

**Religion, Ethnic origin, Cultural origin**

No individual will be refused learning or assessment on the grounds of religion, ethnic origin or culture. Information will be available to all whenever possible, this will be in the first language if English is not understood, or we will try to use an interpreter to ensure information is exchanged accurately in a timely manner. All learners/participants and staff will be expected to respect individual religion, ethnicity and cultural differences.

The curriculum and assessment policies and procedures encourage both staff and learners to treat everyone with equal concern and respect and to value each other. Questions about racial and cultural differences will be answered in a clear, factual way that is understood in an appropriate manner. Positive support for a learner's home language and cultures will be given as this provides a framework for learning English.

*Reference:*

The Race Relations Act, 1976

Employment Equality Religion or Belief Regulations, Dec 2003

**Disability**

AVCT is committed to the integration of learners/participants and staff with a disability or additional need. Extra help or special arrangements may be required including 'reasonable adjustment'. We will not discriminate directly or indirectly against a disadvantaged person/s. It is recommended that all disabilities or special needs are made known throughout our enrolment/induction process, so any necessary reasonable adjustments can be made as soon as possible to promote engagement in work and learning and assessment needs.

*Reference:*

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

**Code of conduct**

AVCT have a zero-tolerance approach towards harassment or bullying towards any member of our organisation, learners/participants or staff. This can include unwelcome comments or behaviour, repetitive criticism, intimidation, insulting, aggressive, undermining self-confidence or the misuse of power. Any action which makes the recipient feels upset, humiliated, threatened or vulnerable. If offensive behaviour is identified or reported and deemed unacceptable an explanation of why it is not acceptable will be made and the behaviour policy/code of conduct followed. Any procedures that will ensure an understanding of specific behaviour will be put in place to ensure 'lessons learnt' and improve our services going forward. Any breach of this policy or procedures by a member of staff or an adult or

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young person visiting the centre may result in disciplinary action. And our learners/participants agree and sign a similar Code of Conduct within their recruitment and induction period.

## **Definitions**

Direct discrimination - means treating people less favourably because of their race, disability, race, gender, the colour of their skin, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexual orientation, religion or age. Indirect discrimination - occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition, whether intentional or not affects adults or children from certain groups.

## **Policy requirements**

All staff, learners/participants will follow this policy statement at all times. A code of conduct to be completed by the learners/participants on induction to their programme. Managers and other staff will ensure that this statement is followed through supervision and quality assurance processes.

## **Staff responsibilities**

All AVCT staff have a responsibility to be aware of and implement the policy on Equality and Diversity by implementing the following:

- Promoting equality, diversity and multiculturalism throughout induction, teaching learning and assessment and work-based situations
- Promoting a “challenge inequality and celebrate diversity” ethos
- Undertaking staff development appropriate to their role
- Promptly reporting any discriminatory issues, unfair treatment, poor practice or misconduct

## **Management responsibilities**

Management has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all staff, learners/participants, volunteers and other stakeholders are aware of this policy and actively promote its implementation
- Promote learning to ensure participation is representative of the local, regional and national demographical data
- Ensure the learning and assessment environment is non-discriminatory and challenge negative behaviours towards race, religion, gender, disability or culture
- Embrace a whole approach to challenging inequality and celebrate diversity
- Ensure all staff are aware of the policy and ensure they receive appropriate training and support to undertake their roles effectively
- Ensure learning resources and marketing literature will promote fair and equal access to teaching, learning and assessment. Particular care will be taken to avoid the use of statements and stereotypes that might reasonably be expected to give offence on the

- grounds of Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Race, and Religion & Belief
- Collect data to analyse participation and achievement of under-represented groups
- Agree equality and diversity impact measures to promote participation and achievement of under-represented groups
- Learner and candidate registration forms ask to detail any additional support requirements that need to be in place. For accredited courses it is the responsibility of the IQA to ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place to accommodate those with additional support requirements
- Process all data in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

### **Equal Opportunities for all**

AVCT is fully committed to providing a good and harmonious working environment that offers equal opportunities for all its learners/participants and staff, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. AVCT recognises that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. Our policy will help all learners/participants, and employees develop their full potential so that the talents and resources will be fully utilised to maximize the efficiency of the organisation. Breaches AVCTs Equality and Diversity policy will result in the disciplinary procedure being invoked against the individuals responsible or involved.

### **Recruitment of employees and apprentices (see Safer Recruitment Policy for further details)**

No vacancy will be advertised or publicised (internally or externally) in a way which discourages applications from any sector of the population. All applications will be considered on merit. Each individual will be assessed against a set of objectives, non-discriminatory criteria that will be directly related to the demands of the particular vacancy. All advertisements, application forms and other recruitment material will clearly state that we are an equal opportunities employer and will avoid statements or questions which tend to discourage applications for employment from any sector of the population.

All interviews will be conducted in accordance with the terms and spirit of this policy. The questions asked of candidates will be closely related to the selection criteria and will be asked in order to elicit information which will give a fair assessment of that particular applicant's ability to perform the tasks required by the vacancy. Specific questions will not be asked of candidates which make assumptions about a candidate's commitment or ability based on any of the grounds identified in the statement of this policy. No one sector of the population will be disadvantaged or discriminated against in relation to the terms of employment offered or applied to them.

AVCT will, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments to its arrangements for interviews and conditions of employment for disabled or disadvantaged applicants where necessary to ensure that existing arrangements or conditions of employment do not place such applicants at a significant disadvantage to other applicants.

## **Promotion**

Internal vacancies will, if possible, be filled by promotion. AVCT will, however, consider enlarging the pool of applicants for promotion where this proves necessary to ensure that, in accordance with its policy, the pool of applicants is capable of fairly representing all sectors of the population. Applicants for promotion will be considered only on the basis of their skill, aptitude, experience and suitability for the vacancy.

## **Training for staff**

Employees involved in recruitment and the management or supervision of others will receive training to help them understand and comply with the law and the policy. No employee will be denied access to training on discriminatory grounds. Specific and/or additional training will be made available for disabled employees as is reasonably necessary.

## **Monitoring**

AVCT will regularly monitor the effectiveness of its processes and procedures to ensure we are achieving our stated aims. We will do this by analysing the results from our recruitment, quality and achievement rates, survey feedback from learners/participants. Identifying real time actions arising from internal and external audits and inspections.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is either:

- Unwanted conduct, whether verbal or not, which is of a sexual or racial nature or which refers to or is based upon a person's disability, or other conduct based on someone's race and/or gender and/or disability which affects the dignity of men or women at work; or
- Bullying of colleagues, especially junior colleagues, by intimidating behaviour
- Unfavourable conduct at work, whether verbal or non-verbal, towards someone based on his/her disability which could affect his/her dignity at work

Harassment or any form of discrimination will not be tolerated under any circumstances. A member of staff who harasses or discriminates against another employee or client or customer of the company will be subject to AVCT's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal.

Harassment generally may include any unwanted verbal or physical abuse and/or advances and/or behaviour which an employee may find offensive and which causes them to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised, distressed, isolated or harassed. It will not necessarily be a defence that such incidents consist of words or behaviour which might be claimed to be "commonplace" or which were intended as a joke or were not intended to be offensive.

Harassment may be deliberate or unconscious, open or covert, direct or indirect, an isolated incident or a series of repeated actions. It may also include, in certain circumstances, off-duty conduct.

It is the duty and responsibility of AVCT and every employee to stop all types of harassment and discrimination in the workplace. It is only through the efforts of individual employees that harassment and discrimination can be eradicated. We must all recognize that every employee in the company has the right not to be subjected to any form of harassment or discrimination.

### **Racial Harassment**

Racial harassment is racial discrimination and is contrary to the AVCTs equal opportunities policy. It is also unlawful. This type of harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances and we will take prompt action upon becoming aware that such incidents have taken place.

Examples of racial harassment may include:

- abusive language and racist jokes
- racial name calling
- the display or circulation of racially offensive written or visual material including graffiti
- physical threats, assault and insulting behaviour or gestures
- open hostility towards workers of a particular racial group, including organised hostility in the workplace
- exclusion from normal workplace conversation or social events, i.e. being “frozen out”

The above examples are not exhaustive and each incident of harassment or discrimination will be viewed on its individual facts.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is similarly sex discrimination, unlawful and contrary to the company’s policy. It is defined as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature by one employee towards another.

Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- insensitive jokes and/or pranks
- lewd comments about appearance or clothing
- unnecessary bodily or physical contact
- displays of sexually offensive materials
- suggestions or requests for sexual favours
- speculation about a person’s private life and/or sexual activities
- threatened or actual sexual violence
- taking photo’s of girls under their clothes-upskirting
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content
- exclusion from normal conversation and social events

Whilst the above list gives examples of sexual harassment, harassment takes many forms from relatively mild sexual banter to actual physical violence. The above examples are not intended

to be exhaustive. Harassment of an individual in this manner on the basis of their sexual orientation (i.e. because they are homosexual, transsexual or undergoing “sex change treatment”) will also be regarded by the company as sexual harassment and will not be tolerated.

### **Harassment on grounds of disability**

Harassment of an individual who has a disability or who has had a disability in the past is unlawful. It is also contrary to AVCTs policies and practices, which seeks to ensure that people with disabilities receive treatment that is fair, equitable and consistent with their skills and abilities. In accordance with statutory requirements, the company recognises that a person with a disability is someone who has or has had a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her normal day-to-day activities. Therefore, depending on individual circumstances a person who has been seriously injured, has or had a progressive illness, cognitive impairment, significant learning difficulties or poor hearing, vision or mobility may be a person with a disability.

#### **Harassment on grounds of disability may include the following:**

- abusive or insensitive language
- inappropriate jokes or pranks
- non-verbal offensive gestures (e.g. staring at a particular affliction)
- inappropriate assumptions about the capabilities of a disabled person
- unfair allocation of work and responsibilities
- exclusion from conversation or social events
- physical mistreatment (e.g. jostling or assault)

The above examples are not exhaustive and each incident of harassment or discrimination will be viewed on its individual facts. As part of our equality and diversity policy, we will make every effort, if a disabled person joins the company or if an existing employee becomes less able, to make such adjustments as are required by law, whether in their existing job or in a suitable available alternative. AVCT will seek to ensure that the needs of people with physical or mental disabilities are considered generally in both the context of our working practices and in the nature of our premises and continuing services.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when a member of staff, learners/participants treat another person less favourably because that other person has:

- brought proceedings alleging that he or she has been discriminated against contrary to this policy
- indicated that they intend to make such a claim or claims
- assisted a colleague to make a claim

Victimisation will not be tolerated under any circumstances and any person who victimises another person will be subject to AVCTs disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct resulting in summary dismissal.



## Complaints and disciplinary action

Where a person believes that he/she is being harassed, victimised or discriminated against contrary to the law or to the equality and diversity policy, he/she can invoke the complaints procedure, whether formal or informal, against the harasser or discriminator. Every complaint will be investigated and dealt with sympathetically without bias and as quickly as is practicable.

Every effort will be made to ensure that individuals who make a complaint in good faith will not suffer any further detriment or be victimised because of making such a complaint. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action, which may include summary dismissal.

Any acts of discrimination or acts which contravene this policy will result in the disciplinary procedure being invoked against the individuals responsible or involved. In severe cases, summary dismissal may be justified.

All members of staff learners/participants are encouraged to use the procedure outlined in this policy if they are harassed, discriminated or victimised. We take all allegations seriously. However, if an allegation is made which AVCT, (after investigation) believes has been made dishonestly or maliciously, we may invoke the disciplinary procedure against the complainant. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal.

Please see Complaints and Whistleblowing Policies for further information.

Guidance and support material

Equality and diversity Act 2010 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

ACAS [Steps for employers to prevent sexual harassment: Sexual harassment - Acas](#)

MIND [Examples of discrimination at work | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#)

CAB [Work - Citizens Advice](#)

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