



## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY (Adopted 21/10/09)

### What is equality?

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equality includes treating people as equal in worth and rights and treating people fairly with dignity and respect.

### What is diversity?

Diversity is about recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways. It is about creating a culture that recognizes, respects and values each other's differences and sees these differences as an asset.

### What is discrimination?

Sometimes people in our society are treated less favorably than another individual or group because of a certain characteristic. This is called discrimination.  
(The law defines nine types of discrimination. See appendix 1.)

### Aims

The **Bridge Collective** aims to make everyone feel welcome and able to take part in what we do.

At the **Bridge Collective** we value people from different backgrounds and perspectives because it is through people's differences that ideas, creativity and better solutions can be found. We also have the opportunity to learn with and appreciate each other.

We aim to have an environment free from discrimination. We aim to address discrimination where it happens in the **Bridge Collective** and to support anyone who experiences discrimination here.

As a minimum we aim not to discriminate against people because of:

race, religion, creed, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, mental distress, disability, HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, ex-offending, appearance, literacy, geographical area, social class and income level.

Because we are all different, we may need to be treated differently to be treated fairly.

The **Bridge Collective** aims for everyone to be treated fairly with dignity and respect.

## Access

**a )** The **Bridge Collective** aims to make sure all our projects, groups activities and work are as accessible as possible to everyone.

**b ) Accommodation.** The **Bridge Collective** aims to ensure that the premises and sites used in its work are accessible.

**c ) Travel.** The **Bridge Collective** recognizes that not everyone has access to personal transport and is able to use it and aims to plan its activities with this in mind.

**d ) Communication.** The **Bridge Collective** recognizes that not everyone has access to or uses a personal computer/

e-mail/internet/ (mobile)phone/answer phone or fixed address.

Also that reading/writing/forms/meetings may not be easy for everyone. The **Bridge Collective** recognizes this and aims to plan its activities with this in mind.

## Recruitment and employees

Selection for employment will be on the basis of aptitude, ability and experience. The Bridge Collective will make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities in line with the disability discrimination act.

For more information about employment support please phone:

The Disability Information Service on 0845 1551005 or see:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/index.htm>

This site has information on:

Employment rights and the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability discrimination at work

All employees, whether part-time, full time or temporary, will be treated with respect.

## Training and development

Training and development opportunities are available to all members of the **Bridge Collective** to further the aims of the **Bridge Collective** and within our financial capacity.

## Engaging with the wider world

The **Bridge Collective** reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies, individuals and organisations whose activities are contrary to the aims of this policy and to actively choose those in line with the aims of this policy.

## Requirements

All projects, groups, activities, work and attendance are covered by this policy.

All employees, directors, keyholders, members, attendees and visitors; and contractors trainers, facilitators, and consultants contracted to work for the Bridge are required to follow and support this equality and diversity policy. If anyone is unable to do so they may be asked to leave. This may result in ineligibility for membership and attendance.

## Positive steps

To prevent discrimination from happening we will take the following positive steps:

- Copies of this policies will be freely available to all employees, directors, keyholders, members, attendees and visitors. A copy will be placed in a prominent position in the **Bridge Collective** premises with a named contact person or team member names written on.
- A sign on the wall stating that we know discrimination occurs and that if it does we want to address it and support anyone experiencing it. (To do)
- Have named contact people you can talk to if you see or are experiencing discrimination.
- Attach to this policy a list of national and local organizations working for equality and diversity.

- To have an equality and diversity resources file.
- To be proactive in making things happen that encourage equality and diversity. E.g opportunities for links with other organizations, training, open meetings and conversations about equality and diversity.
- Keyholder equality and diversity briefings.
- An interactive pin board to offer the opportunity to show who we are using the Bridge Collective. (To do)

### **What can I do if I see or experience discrimination at the Bridge Collective?**

Talk to the named contact people you can talk to if you see or are experiencing discrimination.

We are in the process of developing a formal complaints procedure with a Complaints Team in which there is opportunity to make a complaint confidentially without naming if that's wanted. (To do)

This is in the hope that people can let the Bridge Collective know if discrimination is happening in the hope that we can find solutions together.

### **If you want to raise an issue about discrimination in a more general, less personal way**

There are forums available to do this. These include directors meetings, Spirit of the Bridge meetings, the discussion group, the Newsletter, informal conversation in the Bridge Collective, discussions on the Bridge Collective facebook wall, and coming to meetings where the Bridge Collective policies are reviewed. All of these will be advertised in the current newsletter and at the Bridge Collective.

Would you like to start a support group about an issue? Things you could do:

Talk to others who might want to join a group

Bring the idea to a directors' meeting

Arrange a meeting and invite anyone who's interested.

You could get help with this, for example by talking to one of the employees at the Bridge Collective.

## Exploring ways to resolve a concern or problem about discrimination informally

Does a fellow member, keyholder, facilitator, director or employee, have some practical knowledge or information about the Bridge Collective which could answer a problem or concern about discrimination?

Is there someone you trust who you could talk to about ways to resolve it?

If your problem concerns another person, can you speak to them directly about it? Would having support from someone else make that possible? Support could come from inside the Bridge Collective or from outside. Support could come from a friend or someone you trust, or from one of the support groups in the Bridge Collective.

The Bridge Collective is compiling a Problem Solving Resource Folder which anyone will be able to access. It will contain resources and ideas for ways of raising and resolving problems and concerns.

## Sources of support outside the Bridge Collective

There are box files on the shelf in the Joan of Arc room labelled 'Equality and Human Rights' and 'Advocacy'. These have details of sources of support outside the Bridge Collective or visit the internet links below\*.

**'Useful Organizations'** on page 26 of: **'Equality and Human Rights Resources: A Good Practice Guide'** from Exeter C.A.B. <http://www.exetercab.org.uk/images/stories/equality-good-practice-guide.pdf>

**(Exeter Citizens Advice Bureau (C.A.B.)** Wat Tyler House, King William Street [www.exetercab.org.uk](http://www.exetercab.org.uk) or [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)  
Tel: 01392 208120 or 0844 4994101)

### Devon advocacy services

[www.devon.gov.uk/advocacy.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/advocacy.htm)      [www.devon.gov.uk/devon\\_advocacy\\_services\\_table\\_mk21.doc](http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon_advocacy_services_table_mk21.doc)

Tel: Devon County Council General Enquiries: 0845 155 1015  
DCC Disability Information Service: 0845 155 1005  
(information and help for people with disabilities).

### Rethink- Devon Mental Health Advocacy

[www.rethink.org/how\\_we\\_can\\_help/our\\_services/south\\_west/devon\\_advocacy.html](http://www.rethink.org/how_we_can_help/our_services/south_west/devon_advocacy.html)

Tel:01884 456 0455

### **Advocacy for people with learning disabilities**

[http://www.learningdisabilitydevon.org.uk/local\\_help\\_and\\_support/advocacy-groups-6.html](http://www.learningdisabilitydevon.org.uk/local_help_and_support/advocacy-groups-6.html)

**Age Concern Advocacy** <http://www.devonline.gov.uk/community/?action=show&doc=/db/CommunityDirectory/data/019-000268.xml>

### **ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)**

For employees and employers. [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Tel: 08457 47 47 47 (Minicom users) - 08456 06 16 00

\* **Please note:** information sourced: 8/4/2009. Please contact the listed organizations direct for the most up to date and accurate information about the service they offer

### **Monitoring, implementing and reviewing**

Overseeing this policy is the responsibility of the **director's meeting**. The **director's meeting** will review the policy annually.

The named contact people for the equality and diversity policy will be actively looking out for how things are working.

We are all responsible for encouraging equality and diversity.

A copy of this policy will be given to all new employees, directors, keyholders and members and any visitors or interested person on request.

Induction for employees, directors and keyholders will include a briefing on the equality and diversity policy.

Having an interactive pin board to offer the opportunity to show who we are using the **Bridge Collective**. **to do**

### **Named contact people**

Bridie, Anna and Nicola (agreed 21/10/09)

## Appendix 1. The Law defines 9 types of discrimination.

From: [www.exetercab.org.uk/images/stories/equality-good-practice-guide.pdf](http://www.exetercab.org.uk/images/stories/equality-good-practice-guide.pdf)

and

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) - *Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know?*

*At the moment, there are several different laws to protect people from discrimination on grounds of:*

- race
- sex
- sexual orientation (whether being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual)
- disability (or because of something connected with their disability)
- religion or belief
- being a transsexual person (transsexuality is where someone has changed, is changing or has proposed changing their sex – called ‘gender reassignment’ in law)
- having just had a baby or being pregnant
- being married or in a civil partnership (this applies only at work or if someone is being trained for work), and
- age (this applies only at work or if someone is being trained for work).

**Exeter Citizens Advice Bureau (C.A.B.)** Wat Tyler House, King William Street [www.exetercab.org.uk](http://www.exetercab.org.uk) or [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

### Legislation that protects people from being treated unequally

Equality legislation protects people from being treated unequally. It is often referred to as anti-discrimination legislation. It does not cover every circumstance where people may be treated unequally, but it covers certain groups of people who are more likely to be treated unequally or be discriminated against.

### So what is discrimination?

Discrimination happens when an individual or a group is treated less favourably than another individual or group because of a characteristic. For example, a person who defined themselves as white other, Polish,

went for a job interview. There were five other candidates for the job and the Polish candidate had more experience and qualifications than the other workers but did not get the job as the company wanted to employ a British person. This would be discrimination as the employer had not selected the Polish person because of their nationality.

### **The law says identifies 4 types of discrimination:**

1. Direct discrimination – This is where a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a certain characteristic. The example above about the Polish worker demonstrates this kind of discrimination.

2. Indirect discrimination – This is where a policy, practice or condition imposed by an employer or service provider has an adverse (harmful) effect on one group compared to another.

3. Harassment – This is behaviour which violates your dignity, or makes you feel humiliated. For example, a worker who was heterosexual received many taunts from his employer and other employees that he was gay. He was even written and joked about in the work magazine. This would be seen as (discrimination) harassment.

4. Victimisation – This occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they have reported discrimination.