

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

Centre 404 is committed to valuing and promoting equality and diversity at work and in our service delivery. We believe that everybody who is involved with Centre 404 in any way should be treated fairly and without prejudice. Nobody should be subject to harassment or unequal treatment or be made to feel afraid when at Centre 404 or when using its services. If this happens we will do our best to put this right and we have clear systems in place to deal with any complaints or grievances that are raised in relation to equality and diversity.

This policy applies to:

- All staff, bank workers and agency staff and any candidates applying to work at Centre 404
- Service users, members and volunteers including committee members
- Any other stakeholders, contractors or professionals involved with Centre 404 services or activities

We do not want anyone to be treated unfairly because of any protected characteristic including: race, colour, nationality, religion or belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment, because they are disabled, because they are married or in a civil partnership, if they are an expectant mother or if they have children to look after.

Centre 404 is committed to promoting Equality and Diversity in positive ways and to challenging discrimination in every area of its work. We will provide a copy of this policy on our website and make it available to staff, service users, volunteers and other stakeholders upon request or as required. We endeavour to seek feedback and suggestions from the people we support and who work for us in order to identify any priorities and develop ways to improve, and deal with any issues or concerns.

The Executive committee receive regular updates in relation to equality and diversity and are informed of any issues that are raised by anyone under this policy or the Whistleblowing and Harassment at Work Policies.

The Chief Executive with the assistance of Heads of Service and line managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy. All staff will be required to act in accordance with this policy and Centre 404 will act in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and any other relevant current legislation.

Centre 404 is externally assessed by UK Investing in Equality and Diversity every 2 years and currently holds a silver level award.

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2. Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment

Centre 404 strives to make sure there are clear and robust systems to manage equal opportunities including fair access to employment, support and services, volunteer opportunities and any other Centre 404 activities.

This policy sets out in more detail how we will enable equal opportunities to exist and how we will deal with any complaints or concerns that are raised in relation to equality and diversity issues.

If we receive feedback from any group or individual that does not feel they are getting fair treatment, we will address this in line with our disciplinary, grievance, raising concerns and whistleblowing and/or complaints procedures.

Anyone who wishes to raise a concern in relation to equal opportunities or equality and diversity should follow instructions set out in within this policy specifically in section 6 below.

Appendix 1 lists some examples of what may constitute unfair treatment.

3. Managing Equality and Diversity

3.1 Recruitment

Centre 404 has internal recruitment procedures that act to ensure consistent and fair consideration is given to the requirements of all posts before they are advertised.

A written job description and person specification is provided for every vacancy and will be checked to ensure that it does not request more skills than are required for the post.

All recruitment information and documentation is stored confidentially and in line with Centre 404 Data Protection Policy. Only essential staff involved in the administration and selection process will have access to application forms that have been submitted.

Fair Selection

Diversity monitoring information is collected so that we can monitor who is applying for our vacancies. This information is anonymous and separated from application forms by someone who is not involved in the selection process.

Clear short-listing systems are in place and records maintained for one year. Managers are required to fully complete the forms as evidence that fair selection criteria have been used.

Where practical and possible to do so care will be taken to ensure that shortlisting and interview panel members represent diversity and have relevant skills or knowledge of the role. Where possible a service user representative will be invited to participate in recruitment processes that affect them.

Where interview candidates request reasonable adjustments in order to attend and participate in interviews, Centre 404 will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to accommodate their individual requirements.

Questions are set prior to the interview and all candidates are to be given the opportunity to answer every question. Members of interview panels are given verbal training in relation to equal opportunities and diversity and will consult as a group over any recruitment decisions. Every interview panel member is required to record notes of the interview for every candidate, adjustments will be made for service users or interview panel members who are unable to provide written notes.

We will not enquire about medical conditions that may amount to disabilities until the job offer has been made. The purpose for then doing so will be to ascertain whether reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate that candidate in the particular role.

Candidates will be shortlisted and selected according to their relevant skills and experience and ability to demonstrate they meet the essential criteria of the post.

Successful candidates will usually be informed by telephone or by email that they have been offered a position. Candidates that are unsuccessful at interview will be informed in writing within 5 working days of the interview (where possible) and will be given the opportunity to request feedback.

Candidates that have not been successful with their initial application form will not be informed if they are unsuccessful but feedback may sometimes be provided upon request where practical and reasonable to do so.

Recruitment Checks

All prospective Centre 404 employees will be required to provide proof of their eligibility to work in the UK regardless of their origin. Documentation that is required will be explained to successful candidates once they have been offered and accepted a post.

All offers of employment at Centre 404 are subject to the satisfactory receipt of two written employment references (where available), one of which should be the most recent employer. Candidates may be asked to provide further referees at line managers request and will also be informed if the references received are not satisfactory. Internal references will also be sought from direct line managers of any internal or previous Centre 404 employees, bank workers or agency staff.

Due to the nature of our work all offers of employment are also subject to satisfactory DBS clearance. In line with our commitment to offering equal opportunities, Centre 404 welcomes applications from all sections of the community, including from those with a criminal conviction. The safety and wellbeing of our service users is of utmost importance, so all criminal convictions will be considered with this in mind. Disclosures must be identified at point of job offer. Making a disclosure will not necessarily affect a job offer, as this is dependent on the type and timing of the conviction.

Recruitment Complaints

If any candidates are not happy with any aspect of the recruitment process they should in the first instance speak to the Resources Manager or the relevant Head of Service who will take any relevant action to resolve their query or make any investigations.

Such issues can also be raised more formally as a complaint in line with our Complaints Policy. Copies of this policy are available on our website or upon request by telephone or email at general@centre404.org.uk

3.2 Managing Staff

Centre 404 aims to ensure that all employment procedures and practices are undertaken in line with current employment legislation, the Equality Act 2010 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Induction and Training

New staff will receive copies of this and all other policies named within this document along with a copy of Centre 404 Staff Handbook when they start. Their induction will include a verbal discussion around Centre 404 approach to managing Equality and Diversity, who is responsible for maintaining systems and procedures, and staff responsibilities to meet our standards and expectations.

New staff will be made aware of all training and staff development opportunities that may be available to them during their induction. Some training for example Safeguarding and Health and Safety training will be mandatory and staff will be required to make arrangements to be able to attend. Other opportunities will be made available to staff for any other relevant training in relation to their role or individual requirements.

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Training will be monitored to ensure that all staff groups have equal access to training and development opportunities and the opportunity to develop skills relevant to their role.

All staff will receive internal training on Equality and Diversity at Centre 404 and how this may affect them in their role.

Supervision and Performance Management

All workers shall have access to team meetings and regular one to one's with their line manager and an annual appraisal in line with Centre 404 procedures.

All staff will receive feedback from their manager in relation to their individual performance and be given the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns. Line managers will be responsible for making sure any questions or concerns are followed up accordingly and in line with relevant Centre 404 policies and procedures.

Additional or confidential support around equal opportunities or diversity can also be sought from the Resources Manager or Heads of Service if necessary.

Individual Requirements

Staff are encouraged to disclose individual requirements relating to any protected characteristics that may affect them whilst at work. This way Centre 404 can take any steps to ensure that they are dealt with appropriately and in line with this policy.

Discipline and Grievance Procedures

It will be made clear to all staff that any discrimination in relation any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or any abuse or harassment on any grounds is not acceptable and will be dealt with in line with Centre 404 Disciplinary and Grievance policies. If upheld, any such conduct could be viewed as gross misconduct for which a sanction of dismissal may be imposed.

3.3 Managing Services

Centre 404 is committed to ensuring equality of access to all its services and will aim to ensure that no sector of the community shall be denied access or receive a poor service on the grounds of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Centre 404 will aim to ensure that all its services are provided in line with this policy. In order to promote equality of access we will aim to ensure that:

- Services are based on consultation with those who receive the services and positive steps are taken to ensure all groups, including people with learning disabilities are involved in decision making

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- All services are flexible and responsive to the changing needs in the community
- Information on services is widely available and where necessary targeted to ensure maximum awareness of services provided
- Systems are developed to audit and monitor quality and impact of our work
- An accessible complaints procedure is available to ensure against discrimination in service allocation and delivery
- In advertising and publicity Centre 404 will be presented as an organisation committed to promoting equality of access to employment and services and all information and marketing tools will aim to reflect the diversity of our staff and service users
- That equality objectives are relevant and achievable and performance against these reported annually at Executive Committee Meetings

Centre 404 will challenge any inappropriate behaviour towards staff that is reported and which might be in breach of this policy. This includes any reports or concerns relating to behaviour by service users, family members, carers, advocates, professionals or anyone else involved in our work and activities. If any such allegations are received Centre 404 will take steps to investigate and resolve any concerns. Centre 404 will follow internal procedures or service related guidelines when any allegations are received and will aim to work with the individuals concerned to resolve any issues. Centre 404 reserves the right to withdraw support and services if required where we are unable to reach a resolution or agreement on the issues raised.

4 Responsibilities

Employees, bank workers and agency staff should:

- Actively promote and advance this policy
- Treat colleagues and customers with dignity and respect in line with this policy and Centre 404 mission and values
- Report any concerns in relation to others' inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or comments (this includes other staff, service users, carers or professionals)
- Report any bullying or harassment by colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors, professionals or others to a manager or to the Resources Manager
- Not prejudge or victimise others that make a complaint or allegations of harassment or bullying
- Complete compulsory equality and diversity training

Managers should:

- Ensure they adhere to and actively promote and advance this policy

- Ensure there is a supportive working environment and that any concerns raised by staff are dealt with fairly and consistently and in line with Centre 404 procedures
- Make sure staff know the standards of behaviour expected of them
- Set a good example by their own behaviour
- Intervene to stop bullying or harassment
- Promptly report any relevant complaint or incident to Resources Manager or Head of Service
- Ensure staff receive equality and diversity training and equal access to other relevant training opportunities

Heads of Service should:

- Ensure they adhere to and actively promote and advance this policy
- Champion the principles of this policy at a senior level
- Cascade policy vision within the organisation
- Lead by example in relation to this policy

Executive Committee and CEO will:

- Ensure that any reporting, monitoring and management procedures as set out in this policy are implemented and adhered to
- Ensure they adhere to and actively promote and advance this policy

The members of the Executive Committee and sub-committees are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the equality and diversity policy in their respective services.

Centre 404 will monitor and review the composition of its Executive Committee as required with the aim of promoting a broad-based representation.

5 Review

Centre 404 will aim to monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis.

Equality and Diversity issues will be considered when developing our work and any equality objectives or action plans will take into account any relevant feedback or suggestions that have been made by staff, service users, volunteers or other stakeholders. Objectives will be monitored and reported on annually to the Executive Committee.

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out at committee level in relation to any new policies that are developed, new projects, or significant decisions that are made and share any result with the Executive Committee.

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Any complaints that are made under this policy will be raised confidentially with the Personnel Committee or relevant sub-committee, and any recommendations or actions required will be made available to the Executive Committee for information and any further comments.

6 Reporting concerns

Staff

Any employee or worker that has questions or wishes to raise any concerns in relation to Equality and Diversity at Centre 404 should approach their line manager in the first instance. Concerns and questions can be raised in supervision, at team meetings (where appropriate) or by requesting a private meeting with a manager. If staff do not feel comfortable raising their concerns with their line manager, there is a list of other relevant managers who can also deal with concerns in section 6.1 below.

In addition to this policy employees are also referred to the following Centre 404 Policies that set out in more detail how staff can report concerns or complaints:

- Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Harassment at Work Policy

Service users, customers, volunteers and recruitment candidates

Centre 404 has a complaints policy, an accessible complaints policy and a whistleblowing policy available for anyone who is not employed at Centre 404 and who wishes to raise a concern.

We encourage people to contact us in the first instance if they wish to make a complaint or to raise serious or whistleblowing concerns, the people listed in section 6.1 below are available to deal with complaints and concerns.

6.1 Named Contacts

All Heads of Service can be contacted by telephone on 020 7607 8762.

Head of Housing – Claire Curtis

Head of Learning and Leisure – Liz Atkinson

Head of Supporting Families – Bob Dowd

Head of Central Team / Resources Manager – Amy Curtis

CEO – Linda McGowan

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Email address: general@centre404.org.uk

Postal address: Centre 404, 404 Camden Road, London N7 0SJ

Appendix 1

Examples of common types of unfair treatment

- **Direct Discrimination:** where a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- **Discrimination by perception:** where a staff member or service user is directly discriminated against or harassed because they appear to have a protected characteristic, even though they do not.
- **Discrimination by association:** where a staff member or service user is directly discriminated against or harassed for associating with an individual who has a protected characteristic
- **Discrimination arising from a disability:** where an individual is treated less favourably because of something arising as a consequence from their disability; and the treatment is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim
- **Indirect discrimination:** where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that puts individuals with a specific protected characteristic at a disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Duty to make reasonable adjustments:** the duty to make reasonable adjustments where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with those that are not disabled. An adjustment is likely to be reasonable where it involves little or no cost and/or the organisation has the resources to make it available.
- **Harassment:** conduct related to one of the protected characteristics which is unwanted and has the purpose or effect of violating a staff member or service user's dignity, or creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** where an employee is subjected to detriment for bringing or supporting a complaint under the Equality Act 2010 or being suspected of doing so.
- **Bullying:** offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

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