



HALESWORTH AREA COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Statement

Halesworth Area Community Transport (HACT) is committed to the principle of equal opportunities. HACT will strive to develop a business culture that reflects and embraces equal opportunity and diversity in the workplace and its service provision, in line with the current legislative framework and codes of practice.

All decisions regarding the prioritization of resources/services and benefits of HACT will be made in accordance with equal opportunities principles. All members of HACT will have equal access and the opportunity to make use of all the services and benefits offered by HACT.

In implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy, HACT accepts the statutory requirements laid down in the *Race Relations Act*, *Sex Discrimination Act*, *Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations*, *Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations*, *Employment Equality (Age) Regulations*, *Equal Pay Act* and the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)*.

HACT Trustees will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no job applicant, employee or volunteer receiving less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, trade union membership or non-membership, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or being a part-time or fixed term worker. The objective of HACT is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

Employment Practices

HACT aims to be an equal opportunities employer and to ensure that no job applicant, employee or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any factors irrelevant to a person's ability to do a job.

HACT regards discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, volunteers, clients or of others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct. Condoning such behaviour could also be treated as a disciplinary offence.

As well as disciplining the perpetrator(s) HACT will deliver appropriate support to people who



complain of harassment of themselves or others.

HACT will implement the following:

- selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices generally will be subject to regular review to ensure they comply with the Equal Opportunities Policy;
- accommodation of staff requests to work flexibly, whether part time or some other working arrangement, for specific reason as long as it is possible to agree this and is consistent with the needs of the HACT;
- recognition that organisations are obliged under the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)* to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled people and enable them to do their job without unnecessary difficulty. HACT will make adjustments which are reasonable, whether or not they are obliged to do so by law, and whether or not a disabled applicant or employee is covered by the definition of disabled under the *DDA*;
- acceptance of its obligation not to discriminate against applicants, employees and volunteers on the basis of their religion. HACT also respect the beliefs of all staff and volunteers and will try to accommodate religious beliefs by:

Allowing time for prayers during the working day;

considering dietary requirements when catering and when providing facilities to store food;

where possible allowing those of particular faiths to take their holidays for religious festivals and other religious observance;

trying to arrange job interviews or other important work meetings at times when they do not clash with important religious festivals;

not imposing dress code with which people of a particular religion cannot comply.

Service Delivery

HACT seeks to ensure that its services are accessible to all sections of the community in particular HACT will:

- make public its commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered and will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual;
- attempt to find ways of making services accessible to everyone including people with English as a second language, people with visual or hearing impairments and mobility problems and people who cannot easily travel on public transport;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its activities are carried out in premises which are accessible;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure the transport it provides offers opportunity for people with mobility difficulties to both use the service and, enable them to access the services they require in accordance with the booking procedure;

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- be sensitive to the particular needs of members and users of the service by trying to provide support, such as translations, personal assistance and have regard for the individual's religious beliefs and dietary requirements.

Definitions

HACT understands **discrimination** to be unfavourable treatment of an individual or group of individuals on grounds irrelevant to:

- 1 that person or group's abilities to perform work required of them by HACT or that person or group's entitlements to receive services from HACT.

Direct discrimination is any less favourable treatment, which cannot be objectively justified of a person or group of people because of a personal attribute or condition (not limited to gender, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, sexuality or age).

Harassment is considered to be when a person subjects another to unwanted conduct, which has the purpose or effect of:

- 2 violating that other person's dignity;
- 3 creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for him/her.

Unlawful harassment can be on grounds of the race, religion, sexuality etc of the person being harassed, or because of whom they associate with, are friends with, live with or are married to.

Victimisation takes place where a person is treated less favourably because they have taken action against unlawful discrimination in their workplace. For instance, if a person alleges that sex discrimination has taken place, or supports a colleague who has made that assertion, (for instance, by giving evidence at a grievance or disciplinary hearing or at an employment tribunal), they are protected under the various anti-discrimination acts.

Policy Management and Delivery Mechanisms

1. Responsibility for Implementation

HACT Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the Equal Opportunities Policy, and will implement, monitor and evaluate its delivery.

2. Structure for Implementing the Policy

All employees and volunteers will be informed that an Equal Opportunities Policy is in operation and they will be bound to comply with its requirements. The Policy will also be drawn, where appropriate, to the attention of HACT members, funding agencies, job applicants and users.

The equal opportunities Statement will be displayed in HACT offices, visible to staff, volunteers and



visitors. The attention of employees, volunteers and Trustees will be directed to a copy of the whole Policy upon appointment/election and whenever the Policy is modified.

HACT will keep up to date with developments in equal opportunities practice. It will provide regular updating for employees, volunteers and Trustees.

3. Obligations of Staff

The Trustees have the primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:

- 1 not discriminating in the course of employment against employees or job applicants;
- 2 not inducing or attempting to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- 3 bringing to the attention of employees that they will be subject to action under the Disciplinary Policy for discrimination of any kind.

Employees and volunteers can contribute by not discriminating against fellow employees, volunteers, clients, suppliers or members of the public with whom they come into contact during the course of their duties. It is not appropriate to induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination. All inappropriate actions must be reported to the Trustees.

4. Procedure for dealing with complaints of discrimination

HACT Grievance and Disciplinary Policies will be used to deal with complaints about discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying involving employees and volunteers. Complaints from passengers are covered by HACT Complaints Policy. Complaints involving Trustees should be through whichever of the above policies is most relevant. The organisation will treat seriously any complaint that the Equal Opportunities Policy has not been followed.

5. Personal Data

HACT may ask clients using services, job applicants and volunteers for information about their ethnic origin, disability, marital status, age or other personal information, but will only do this for a specific defined purpose, such as collecting statistical data for funders, for research, or their own monitoring to evaluate the impact of HACT Equal Opportunities Policy. Any such information requested will remain anonymous and confidential.



6. Monitoring and Review

This policy is subject to review and improvement; its effectiveness will be measured during day to day monitoring of HACT. It will be reviewed regularly by the Trustees and any necessary amendments or additions made and communicated.

See also Complaints & Accolades Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy.

Signed on behalf of Halesworth Area Community Transport:

Signed.....*Jmhowell*.....

Position.....Operational manager.....

Dated.....13th January 2023.....