

The Tree of Life Centre (Formerly UCHM)

Counselling, College and Room Hire

Cedar Tree Counselling Service BACP Accredited Service, affiliated with ACC and works according to BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions and ACC code of Ethics and Practice

Trinity Training College CPCAB Approved Centre delivering CPCAB Accredited and ACC recognised courses

The Elms Sports Hall and Room Hire



"The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" Rev 22:2

Equality and Diversity Policy

1st October 2024

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Affiliated Counselling and Training Organisation (UK based)
Affiliate No. A00031



Policy Statement

1. The Tree of Life Centre recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Charity and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Charity to ensure that no employee or job applicant or service user receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
2. Our aim is that our workforce and service user will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
3. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.
4. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or voluntary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, any client because of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Our services are open to all who need them irrespective of age, colour, creed, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, information, knowledge, mobility, money, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, status, etc. (As long as we can meet their mental health needs)
6. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

Responsibilities of the Leadership Team

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the CEO and we will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The Management will ensure that:

- All their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- Proper records are maintained.

The CEO will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic audits.

Responsibilities of Staff/volunteers

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- Comply with the policy and arrangements;
- Not discriminate in their day-to-day activities or induce others to do so;
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or clients who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- Inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Third Parties

Third-party harassment occurs where a Charity employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as Professionals/clients. The Tree of Life Centre will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. The Tree of Life Centre will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

Related Policies and Arrangements

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Charity policies will be reviewed on a regular basis and any discriminatory elements removed. The Charity operates in an open and honest basis and changes will be made should any concerns arise.

Monitoring

- The Charity deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

- There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- If monitoring shows that the Charity, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Charity, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Charity policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

Grievances & Discipline

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Charity Grievance Procedure. In such an event the complaint will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences, and they will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Please also see the BACP complaints procedure.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/protecting-the-public/professional-conduct/how-to-complain-about-a-bacp-member/>

Review

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually under the direct supervision of the Directors.

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Document Revisions

| Equality & Diversity policy | | | |
|--|--|------------|-------------|
| Version | Description of Change | Date | Review Date |
| 1.0 | New Document | 06/11/2019 | |
| 1.1 | Reviewed & updated | 18/09/2020 | |
| 1.2 | Reviewed & updated to include details of BACP complaints procedure. | 24/09/2021 | |
| 1.3 | Changes associated with the renaming of UCHM to The Tree of Life Centre | 11/01/2023 | |
| 1.4 | Additional changes associated with the renaming of UCHM to The Tree of Life Centre | 20/02/2023 | |
| 1.5 | Reviewed – no change | 27/09/2023 | Sept 2024 |
| 2 | Reviewed – Changes made to the Policy Statement sections 1,2 and 5. | 01/10/2024 | Oct 2025 |