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# Equal Opportunities Policy (2024)

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Signed	Keith Marsh

## A policy for Equal Opportunities

For the purpose of this document 'child/young person' refers to anyone under the age of 18

Love Dereham Ltd is a Christian organisation which seeks to operate within a Christian purpose and ethos. As such, it is fully committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, valuing and embracing diversity and ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach in all fields of its activity. Love Dereham Ltd adheres to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following specific protected characteristics: sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy & maternity.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the mission of Love Dereham Ltd.

### SCOPE

In accordance with the Love Dereham Ltd's commitment to issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion; all its Trustees, Directors, employees, volunteers and service users have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy, creating an environment free from discrimination.

### AIM

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of equality, diversity and inclusion in Love Dereham Ltd's values:

- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in its practices and procedures.
- To ensure that it is compliant with the statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure employment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed so that they do not operate against its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Occupational Requirement - in the light of our Christian purpose and ethos, Love Dereham Ltd reserves the right to exercise legal exemptions under the Equality Act 2010 where it is declared that a Christian faith is integral to the work and requirements of a specific role.

### PROTECTED GROUPS EQUALITY ACT 2010

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

### DEFINITIONS

#### **1. Discrimination:**

(a) 'Direct Discrimination' is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits of the case but on grounds of a protected characteristic.

- (b) 'Discrimination by association' occurs where a person is directly discriminated against by association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- (c) 'Discrimination by perception' is where a person is directly discriminated against based on a perception that the person has a particular protected characteristic even if the person does not actually possess that protected characteristic.
- (d) 'Indirect Discrimination' occurs when a provision, practice or a criterion that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Although equally applicable to all possible applicants, this may nevertheless be discriminatory because:
- (i) The number of persons of the same personal status who can comply with the requirement is considerably smaller than the number who cannot; and
  - (ii) The requirement cannot be shown to be justifiable.

## **2. Harassment:**

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity. There are three types:

- (a) Harassment related to a protected characteristic
- (b) Sexual harassment
- (c) Less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment

## **3. Victimisation:**

Occurs when an individual is treated badly or has suffered a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Trustees, Directors, Employees and Volunteers are responsible for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. Particular responsibility lies with the Trustees and Directors of Love Dereham Ltd.

The Trustees and Directors within Love Dereham Ltd will:

- Ensure that its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is communicated to all employees and volunteers fairly and responsibly; including potential employees, volunteers and users of its services.
- Lead by example, encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion internally and externally.
- Be responsible for creating a climate where the differences that individuals bring are valued.
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion in decision making processes.

Service Coordinators of Love Dereham Ltd will:

- Foster good relations between all employees, volunteers and service users/providers.

- Ensure that all Love Dereham Ltd service groups promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

All employees and volunteers of Love Dereham Ltd will:

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is taken into account in undertaking their work with Love Dereham Ltd.
- Be aware of their responsibilities and report inappropriate behaviour/s and raise any incident/s that breach this policy and procedure with the Trustees and Directors.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedure, ensuring that their practices are consistent with its contents.

### **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within Love Dereham Ltd's recruitment and selection procedures.

Love Dereham Ltd is a Christian organisation which seeks to operate in and for the name of Christ and those who work in the organisation must be in sympathy with the Christian beliefs as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association Statements of Beliefs.

For some roles within Love Dereham Ltd, more than a loyalty to its Christian ethos is required and these posts are recognised as having Genuine Occupational Requirements.

Accordingly, Love Dereham Ltd is committed to equal opportunity and its policy to treat job applicants, employees and volunteers in the same way.

Further details can be found in the Appendices to this policy.

### **BREACHES OF THIS POLICY**

If any employee, volunteer or service user believes that he/she has been subject to discrimination under this Policy, then they are encouraged to raise the matter with the Secretary for Love Dereham Ltd or one of the Trustees.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this Policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and no one who makes such allegations in good faith will be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

Any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed annually and action taken as necessary.

## Appendices

### (i) **Legislation: Relevant Acts of Parliament**

The Equality Act 2010.

### (ii) **Guidelines for Promoting Equal Opportunities**

#### Advertising

All publicity material should reflect Love Dereham Ltd's Equal Opportunity Policy.

It is the general policy of Love Dereham Ltd that vacancies for paid posts shall be advertised both internally and externally.

Vacancies should be advertised as widely as possible, internally and externally (press), through Job Centres and Careers Offices. Personnel at these institutions should be informed of the Organisation's positive equal opportunities policy and its General Occupational Requirements, where appropriate.

Personal recommendations from existing employees as a primary or sole method of attracting applicants will not be permitted.

All advertisements must be clear and unambiguous to ensure that all applicants will be able to determine their own suitability.

#### Job Descriptions & Person Specifications (Employed positions only)

Every post must have a job description and person specification.

The job description and person specification must be accurate and strictly relevant to the requirements of the job. The criteria should not be unnecessarily restrictive so as to exclude particular groups, as this may be viewed as indirect discrimination and therefore unlawful.

#### **Initial Selection**

Short listing must only be based on the information contained in the application form, using the person specification as the criteria.

The criteria for the initial selection must be applied consistently to all applicants.

Where academic qualifications are one of the criteria for initial selection, these must be geared to the requirements of the particular job and not be artificially high. Overseas qualifications must also be accepted where they are deemed to be, or can be shown to be, equivalent.

Any disabled applicant meeting the criteria for initial selection must be interviewed, irrespective of any requirements to adapt facilities or buildings should they be successful.

Reasons for rejecting or not shortlisting an applicant must be recorded for incorporation into the recruitment monitoring process.

Initial short listing and interviewing should be undertaken by an appointed group of Trustees and the Coordinator, as appropriate to the vacancy to be filled. If deemed necessary, a wider group of Trustees and if appropriate, the Coordinator, will make the final candidate selection from the shortlist.

#### **Selection**

Personnel responsible for interviews and selection should ideally have received training in the field of interviewing, or have relevant practical experience and be fully aware of issues relating to equal opportunities.

Interviewers must not ask questions:

- about personal circumstances unrelated to the requirements of the job, such as family commitment
- about a candidate's reactions to a supervisor of a different race or gender.
- designed to test more vigorously certain candidates on the basis of gender, race or gender, race or disability.

In determining a candidate's suitability for a post, interviewers must only consider those factors relevant to the job. The criteria applied to the interview must be those listed in the Job Specification. All application forms should be kept for 12 months after the end of the recruitment action.

Where there is a doubt about a disabled candidate's suitability for employment because of their disability, further advice should be sought as to the nature of the disability and the availability of aids to employment or adaptation to building before a decision is taken.

Informal interviews must not take place unless they are clearly part of the formal selection process.

If any member of the interviewing panel feels that discrimination has occurred in that selection process, the matter should be reported directly to the Secretary or the Chair of the Trustees.

### **Issue of Policy**

A copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy is issued to all employees and volunteers on commencement of their post. The policy must be read and understood. Should our periodic review of the policy necessitate any amendments, the amended copy will be issued to all current employees.

### **Training**

Love Dereham Ltd recognises that training is essential to maximise the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of its workforce and will ensure that training needs within Love Dereham Ltd are properly determined and adequately met. All employees and volunteers will have equal access to training facilities provided by Love Dereham Ltd and will be encouraged to take advantage of training facilities that are available.

Love Dereham Ltd will provide training opportunities, which will allow employees and volunteers to develop skills appropriate to their job and to further their career development.

### **Other Personnel Procedures**

It is unlawful to discriminate in the operation of grievance, discipline or dispute procedures.

It should not be assumed that anyone from a Protected Group who have complaints are over-sensitive about discrimination, nor should grievances be treated lightly or ignored.

In all grievance cases involving equal opportunities, the chair of Trustees must be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

### **Violence, Harassment and Bullying**

Violence, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and appropriate action will be taken to exclude any perpetrator from Love Dereham Ltd's premises and those of associated organisations. In all cases which breach the law prosecution will be pursued.

All reasonable security precautions have been and shall continue to be taken to prevent risk of violence, harassment or bullying against employees, volunteers, clients and visitors. Should

employees, residents or visitors be subjected to violence, bullying or harassment on or off the premises, they are encouraged to report the matter to the Secretary, the Chair or any other of the Trustees for Love Dereham Ltd to whom they feel comfortable to address.

### **Implementation**

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers; however, the main responsibility lies with the board of Trustees.

### **DBS Checks**

Because working for Love Dereham Ltd may require working face to face with children and young people, members of staff and volunteers may be subject to a Disclosure Barring Service check (DBS.) This will depend on the criteria within the role under guidelines from the DBS. If a DBS check is required, the appointment of staff and volunteers will be dependent on completed DBS checks. Disclosure relating to criminal convictions will be requested on all application forms.