



Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

## 1. **Background**

The Employer is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that its places of work are free from unlawful discrimination on the characteristics of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex (gender reassignment), marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, age, fixed term or part time status, religion or belief or disability.

We aim to ensure that our staff achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or unlawful criteria. We have adopted the following equal opportunities policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

## 2. **What is discrimination?**

2.1 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage because of a discriminatory characteristic in relation to his or her employment. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional.

### Examples

- A woman with young children fails to obtain a job because it is feared that she might be an unreliable member of staff.
- An African applicant for a senior post is not appointed because he might not fit in with the existing (all white) team.
- An older woman is not appointed for a job because it is felt that older women are not physically strong enough to perform in that role.

2.2 Indirect discrimination occurs where the individual's employment is subject to an unjustified condition which one group (for example women) finds more difficult to meet although on the face of it the condition or requirement is "neutral".

### Examples

- A requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have disproportionately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.
- Full-time work - this would have a disproportionately adverse impact on women as they are generally accepted as taking the primary childcare role. It may not be justified if our needs can still be met by more flexible working arrangements.

2.3 There are additional concepts concerning disability discrimination. Discrimination arising from disability occurs where an individual is treated unfavourably because of something arising as a consequence of their disability (unless the treatment can be justified).

### Examples

- An individual with cancer has a significant amount of time off because of treatment they are having. A decision to dismiss could be discriminatory if it cannot be justified.
- A blind job applicant being refused a job due to their use of a guide dog as the Employer does not allow dogs on their premises.

2.4 An employer also discriminates against a disabled person if they fail (without justification) to make reasonable adjustments for them.

Examples

- Failure to recruit a wheelchair user without first considering whether the working arrangements or premises can reasonably be adapted to his needs.
- Failure to allow a disabled person to be absent from work for treatment for a condition relating to their disability.

2.5 Harassment occurs where a person is subject to unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Examples

- A person is subjected to sexual innuendo or other offensive conduct of a sexual nature at work.

2.6 Victimation occurs where an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues because he/she has taken action to assert their statutory rights or assisted a colleague with information in that regard.

**3. Implementing equality of opportunity**

- 3.1 Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Our selection procedures are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination.
- 3.2 The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made where reasonably practicable to do so to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff participate fully in the workplace.
- 3.3 Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.
- 3.4 Employees of the Charity will be required to be Christians and to assent to the statement of faith of the Charity and to comply with the Code of Conduct where this is an occupational requirement having regard to the nature of the employment or the context in which it is carried out. The occupational requirement must be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.]
- 3.5 Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity.
- 3.6 Working patterns will be reviewed so as to enable us to offer flexible working to staff where possible.
- 3.7 All staff have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. We will take any breach of this policy very seriously. A breach of this policy is potentially a serious



disciplinary matter. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds is entitled to raise the matter through the grievance procedure.

**4.0 Adoption of this policy**

4.1 The trustees of The Big Story Trust formally accepted this policy on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017.