



Herts Vision Loss

Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

Equal Opportunity and Diversity Statement

Herts Vision Loss (HVL) is committed to providing a service to its clients and a working environment for its staff and volunteers which is free from discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, race, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment status, marital or civil partnership status, part time working, fixed term working or trade union activity. HVL also recognizes and will promote the positive benefits of diversity so that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of the community we serve and each employee will feel respected and able to give of their best.

Employees, Trustees and Volunteers have an obligation to act in accordance with this policy in all aspects of their activities on behalf of Herts Vision Loss and must behave in a way that does not discriminate towards colleagues, clients or suppliers.

Aims

1. To have a recruitment and selection procedure which promote diversity and equality of opportunity.
2. To ensure that all services that HVL provide to the current and potential visually impaired community are available, without qualification, to them as well as their family members, carers and others who may need them.
3. To have a staff development programme which supports and enables all aspects of equal opportunities and an understanding of the positive benefits of diversity.
4. To record and act on reported incidents of harassment and discrimination. Detailed information on discrimination and harassment is contained in the Schedule to this policy. Acts of discrimination constitute misconduct under the rules of HVL and may be dealt with within HVL's Disciplinary Procedure. If a complaint under this policy is raised (either by the complainant directly or someone who needs to raise a complaint because they are aware of a breach of this policy), it will be dealt with under HVL's Grievance Procedure.
5. To monitor and review policy as necessary and ensure that it conforms to current legislation and codes of practice of statutory bodies such as ACAS and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Equal Opportunities & Diversity in Employment Policy

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1. Staff

Recruitment and Selection

- Each applicant will be assessed according to their qualifications, experience and professional competence. These should be the only factors forming the criteria for appointment and promotion.
- Any qualifications, requirements or considerations applied to a post which effectively restrict it to applicants of one sex, single people or particular ethnic group should be retained only if they are justifiable in terms of the job to be done.
- Records of selection regarding individual appointments will be retained for monitoring purposes. Such records will remain confidential.

Sources of Recruitment

1. Advertisements should be worded clearly and unambiguously.
2. All advertisements should carry a statement of the HVL's commitment to equal opportunities.
3. Advertisements will be placed in publications and locations which do not exclude a diverse range of applicants that reflects the wide community HVL serves and draws upon a wide talent pool.

Job Descriptions

1. Job requirements should be clearly outlined in a job description.
2. All requirements must be clearly justifiable in terms of the principal functions of the post.
3. The criteria for the post should not be weighed in favour of one particular sex or racial group unless it can be justified in terms of the job to be done.

Guidance notes for applications, shortlisting and appointments

1. All applications should be processed in exactly the same way
2. All those involved in the appointments procedure should be aware of, and act in accordance with, the Equal Opportunities Policy of the Charity.

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3. The job description and personal specification will be used as criteria for short listing candidates in conjunction with the application form and supporting evidence.
4. Reasons for not interviewing or rejecting candidates will be made available to candidates on request.
5. Interviewers should not imply discrimination by asking questions about personal circumstances unrelated to the job.
6. Interviewers should not ask different questions for male and female candidates. Applicant's gender, sexual orientation, marital status, children and domestic arrangements should not form part of the selection criteria.
7. Reasons for decisions should be recorded

Working conditions

HVL will promote working conditions which support work life balance, such as family friendly practices and flexible working, where there are clear and positive benefits for both the employee and employer.

As far as employees with a disability are concerned, the Charity recognises its duty under the Disability Discrimination Act to make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements or premises where these discriminate against disabled employees. Employees should ensure the Company is aware of their disabilities to enable the Charity to make such reasonable adjustments.

Promotion

Recruitment for posts and promotion will normally be by open competition, unless there is good cause for internal promotion.

Monitoring

Monitoring of all procedures will take place as necessary, at intervals set by the CEO.

Review

The policy will be reviewed by the Board at not more than 3 year intervals.

2. Volunteers

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Whilst the recruitment procedures and sources are different for volunteers; the same principles of non-discrimination will apply. Volunteers are sought to help the Charity deliver the full range of its services.

The selection criteria that are applicable relate to the volunteers ability to be able to work within the requirements of a particular service area and as assessed according to the requirements of the Role Profiles for each service area. This is matched to the potential volunteers stated preferences for the service area or areas they would like to work in according to their own ability to commit time and expertise to the tasks required.

It is possible that to advance certain service areas or projects that volunteers with specific backgrounds would be particularly encouraged and this could apply, for instance, to visual impairment, ethnicity or language skills.

Sources of recruitment will include placing requirements in Councils for Voluntary Service, Volunteer Bureaux and other community locations such as libraries. Advertising in community publications (e.g. parish magazines) will also be undertaken as well as attendance at community based volunteer recruitment fairs. Applications are also received via the Volunteering page of the Charity's website, where there is an application link to the administration p.c. e-mail.

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