Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelter (FCENS)

Equality & Diversity Policy

May 2024

To be next reviewed in May 2025

FCENS, 8 Church End, Walthamstow E17 9RS
Charity No. 1148362 Company Limited by Guarantee No: 7904107

Introduction

FCENS is a Christian organisation that is passionate about living out God's kingdom values of love, hope, justice and transformation. It's what inspires us and drives us. FCENS will therefore, reflect this Christian ethos through its treatment of staff, volunteers, guests and all other people it works with, and in all of its developments.

FCENS is an equal opportunities employer and service provider and believes in the intrinsic value of every person and as such, that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination or favour regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), language, religion or belief, political persuasion, social origin, disability, sexuality or any other characteristic.

We will not tolerate processes, attitudes or behaviour that amount to any form of discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, stereotyping or any other reason.

FCENS is committed to taking positive action to identify any unlawful discrimination in every aspect of its work and works in accordance with all current legislation and codes of practice.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all.

Recruitment

1. We believe that our activities should be open to all. We aim to ensure that all who wish to work for, or volunteer to help with us have an equal chance to do so.
2. A written job description and person specification is prepared for every vacancy that arises or every new post that is created. It is checked for areas of discrimination before the recruitment procedures start. Applicants are made aware that life experiences, as well as voluntary and paid work, are valued.
3. All new paid positions are advertised externally to our organisation.
4. Discriminatory questions are prohibited.
5. Applicants with a disability are invited to discuss their specific needs and requirements.
6. The applicant who best meets the criteria laid down is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This ensures fairness in the selection process. All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.
7. FCENS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the specific needs of disabled employees are met.
8. Job descriptions and related advertising indicate that FCENS is an equal opportunities employer.
9. We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.
10. We believe in creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination

Service Delivery

FCENS is committed to ensuring equality of access to all of its services. It does this by ensuring that:

1. Services are based on consultation with guests and steps are taken to include hard-to-reach groups.
2. Services are flexible and responsive to the changing needs in the community.
3. Information on services is widely available and targeted to ensure maximum awareness of provisions.

4. There is an accessible complaints procedure to ensure against discrimination in service allocation and delivery.

Access to our activities

1. FCENS is open to all members of the community.
2. We advertise our services widely.
3. We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
4. We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
5. We do not discriminate against anyone with a disability or refuse entry because of any disability.
6. We ensure that all have access to our equality and diversity policy.
7. We ensure that people with disabilities can participate successfully in our activities, and provide special facilities for the disabled including access ramps and purpose built toilet facilities where possible.

Training

New and existing employees and volunteers are aware of the training opportunities available to them and are positively encouraged to take them up.

Support

New and existing staff and volunteers have access to support. If a worker feels isolated, provision is made to support them form within the organisation or externally.

Discipline & Grievance

It is made clear to all employees and volunteers that discrimination, abuse or harassment on the grounds of race, age, gender, disability, sexuality or any other characteristic will not be tolerated.

We will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, guests, volunteers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Details of the organisation's grievance policy can be found at www.forestnighshelter.org.uk.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to

- All staff employed by FCENS irrespective of funding agent.
- All volunteers of FCENS
- All guests of FCENS
- All campaigning and promotional functions of FCENS
- All trustees and members of FCENS.

Signed: **Ian Drury**

Position: Chair of trustees
Date: 31st May 2024

This policy is subject to review, monitoring and revision every 12 months (or sooner if work activity or legislation changes.)