

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

Conciliation Resources values diversity and inclusion, seeks to ensure there is no unfair discrimination in its working practices and to take positive steps to support staff, volunteers and trustees from groups that are or have been disadvantaged through discrimination.

This policy aims to:

- Outline Conciliation Resources' commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for employees, volunteers and trustees;
- Affirm our commitment to diversity across our employees, volunteers, trustees and others working with Conciliation Resources, in recognition of the benefits that diversity brings;
- Provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice and creating an environment in which diversity and inclusion are actively supported.

Conciliation Resources regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of others in the course of work as a disciplinary offence that could be regarded as gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal (in line with our Standards of Conduct policy).

Aims and rationale

Conciliation Resources provides practical professional support for community based and national organisations seeking to develop effective, non-violent responses to conflict or potential conflict. In line with our belief in the importance of building inclusive societies, Conciliation Resources prioritises the creation of an inclusive work environment for its employees, volunteers and trustees. We believe that diversity within Conciliation Resources strengthens our ability to provide effective and appropriate support to people in areas affected by armed conflict, and we aim to offer ourselves as a model of good practice to our partners and with those that we work.

Conciliation Resources aims to ensure a working environment that is international, multicultural and welcoming of diversity, and to attract and retain people with the skills necessary to help it deliver its vision and mission.

Conciliation Resources aims to ensure that staff, volunteers and job applicants do not face conscious or sub-conscious discrimination in the recruitment process or in working for or with Conciliation Resources. The UK Equality Act 2010 consolidated and extended previous discrimination legislation that was in place

in the UK and detailed '**protected characteristics**' i.e. those characteristics that are protected by the provisions of this Act which are¹:

- Age – where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 years old) or range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 years old).
- Disability – a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Race – refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- Sex – man or woman
- Religion or cultural beliefs – religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- Gender reassignment – the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- Marital status and civil partnership – in England, Wales and Scotland marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as "civil partnerships". Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
- Sexual orientation – whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite or both sexes.
- Pregnancy and maternity – pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating somebody unfavourably because they are breastfeeding.

or in respect of these additional characteristics:

- Political opinion
- Social origin or class
- Educational background
- Gender identity
- Sexuality
- Health
- Caring Responsibilities
- Ex-offender status.

Conciliation Resources will adhere to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as UK and EU legislation in areas such as equality, diversity and human rights legislation in addition to its own commitments.

Conciliation Resources recognises that despite its existing and historical commitment to equality and diversity, the composition of its employee, volunteer and trustee body will never be entirely representative of the constituencies in the world or the UK. Over time the composition will change reflecting the requirements Conciliation Resources has at any particular point, the pool of candidates available to recruit and the methods used for such recruitment. Conciliation Resources is committed to continue to working for continuous improvement towards the aims stated above.

¹ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/protected-characteristics-definitions/> accessed 16 June 2015

The success of this policy in increasing diversity and inclusion will therefore ultimately be reflected in the effectiveness of Conciliation Resources' work and in how people feel about working for Conciliation Resources.

Scope

This policy applies to all grades within Conciliation Resources including trustees, those on fixed term contracts, volunteers, or employees seconded to Conciliation Resources.

It is also expected that agency workers, consultants or contractors and others working on behalf of Conciliation Resources whether in a paid or unpaid capacity will comply with this policy.

This policy, which is reviewed and updated from time to time, must be brought to the attention of all new trustees, employees and volunteers of Conciliation Resources as part of their induction process. In addition all consultants and contractors will be provided with a copy of this policy as part of the Consultant's Handbook.

Whilst this policy is part of the terms and conditions of employment with Conciliation Resources it does not form part of the contract of employment as the content may be subject to revision based on experience and changes in UK or other laws.

The policy applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to standards of conduct and recruitment.

Types of Discrimination

Conciliation Resources' commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

Direct discrimination – where someone with a *protected characteristic* is treated less favourably than another, because of having that *protected characteristic*.

Indirect discrimination – when a rule, criteria or condition is put in place which then results in a particular group of individuals or employees being put at more of a disadvantage than another group of individuals or employees. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.

Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.

Harassment – unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.

Victimisation – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act 2010 or it is thought that they have done so.

Recruitment Practices

As an employer, Conciliation Resources aims to promote equality and diversity and to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that are not justifiable in the context of this policy.

Selection and recruitment practices are subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with this Equality and Diversity Policy and with UK law.

Job vacancies must be drafted to be as inclusive as possible and must be published widely, whether just in Conciliation Resources or externally, so as not to exclude. Training opportunities should be widely promoted to all employees and volunteers and not in such a way as to exclude particular groups.

When carrying out advertising for any role, it is important to carefully consider the pool of candidates that you are seeking to reach in the context of the role and in the context of the representation within Conciliation Resources of that group from which you may wish to recruit. This may mean using different and alternative channels from those Conciliation Resources usually uses, and actively seeking applications from people within the group that is under-represented in Conciliation Resources. You should discuss your requirements with the Office Manager as part of planning the recruitment campaign and allow sufficient time to investigate options prior to publication of any recruitment advert.

Positive Action

Whilst positive discrimination is illegal under UK employment law it is permitted to carry out positive action before or at the application stage, or in tie-break situations².

Before or at the application stage positive action could include encouraging particular groups to apply, or helping people with particular protected characteristics to perform to the best of their ability (for example, by giving them training or support not available to other applicants).

An example of a tie-break situation is where two applicants are equally qualified and could undertake the role: here, it is permitted to use the fact that one of them is from a less represented group as a deciding criterion.

Working Environment in Conciliation Resources

As an employer, Conciliation Resources aims to promote equality and diversity and to ensure that no employee, volunteer or trustee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that are not justifiable in the context of this policy.

Conciliation Resources is committed, to the extent possible within the framework of the law and delivering on our mission and vision, to providing a working environment that supports all staff in their life inside and out of work. It also seeks to provide an environment where staff can be appropriately supported as both they and Conciliation Resources develop over time. Training and promotion practices are subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with this Equality and Diversity Policy and with UK law.

² <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-workers/recruitment/positive-action-and-recruitment/>
Accessed 16 June 2015

This policy forms part of creating that environment as do policies such as, amongst others, Leave, Flexible Working Arrangements, Additional Care Costs, Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace, Standards of Conduct Policy and Recruitment of Internal Candidates.

Sustaining and developing this environment requires constant work; the Executive Management Committee is committed to developing and strengthening this over time.

Conciliation Resources as Service Provider

In developing its publications and other products and services, Conciliation Resources seeks to ensure accessibility. This may include, where practicable, making specific access arrangements for those with disabilities or any other protected characteristic which may apply. Conciliation Resources will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

Monitoring

In order to assess performance against its stated aims and legal responsibilities, Conciliation Resources carries out diversity surveys of applicants for vacant positions and (periodically) of staff and volunteers. Participation in these surveys is voluntary and responses anonymous. The data is reviewed by the Director of Operations and the Office Manager to look at the mix of candidates applying and what we can learn in seeking to reach other constituencies. Periodically information is reported to the Executive Management Committee and the Board.

Responsibilities

Conciliation Resources values its staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants, board members and partners, and expects them to be treated in a respectful manner. Equally, all have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. Responsibility for human resources issues rests with the Director of Operations and the Office Manager and they are responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and for ensuring that this policy is kept up to date. If an issue arises, in the first instance you should raise it with your Line Manager, or if this is not possible, with the Director of Operations or the Office Manager. If the issue involves the Director of Operations you should either talk with your Executive Management Committee Director or the Executive Director in the first instance.

Guidance provided by Conciliation Resources or other sources should be considered in addition to human rights and equality legislation, not in place of it.

The Operations team will provide guidance on best practice, provide training where appropriate and provide links to external sources of best practice guidance.

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