



GCRA Ltd
trading as **Grampian Heart & Health**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Owner:	GCRA Ltd trading as Grampian Heart & Health
Policy approved by:	The Board, GCRA Ltd
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Next review Date:	20 October 2027 or after any incident/as a response to new legislation

Statement of purpose

Grampian Heart & Health is committed to supporting equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and a feeling of belonging in our workforce. The purpose of this policy is to:

- prevent and protect against unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- nurture a positive working environment where individual differences and contributions of all team members are recognised and valued.
- create a culture that reflects our values and promotes the well-being of all team members.

The aim is for our workforce to be diverse and for employees, self-employed instructors, volunteers and the board of trustees to feel respected, valued and able to give their best. The above people are referred to collectively as our 'team members' and our 'workforce' throughout this policy.

We are committed to:

- supporting a diverse and inclusive culture free from bullying, harassment and unfair discrimination, where everyone can thrive.
- upholding an organisational culture where everyone feels a personal responsibility for equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- providing equality, fairness and respect for all in our workforce whether voluntary, part-time, full-time or on a contractual basis.
- protecting our workforce against all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Equity and equality of opportunity

In our commitment to developing an inclusive and diverse place to work or deliver services, being clear on the distinction between equity and equality is important. While both terms aim to promote fairness, they address different aspects of creating a supportive and accessible environment for all team members.

- Equality
 - Equality focuses on treating everyone the same, providing equal opportunities and resources to all team members (and potential team members in our recruitment processes) irrespective of their unique needs or circumstances.
- Equity
 - Equity recognises that individuals have different needs and circumstances. It involves distributing resources and opportunities in a way that accounts for these differences, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

"Equality is giving everyone a shoe. Equity is giving everyone a shoe that fits."

By understanding and embracing both concepts, we can create an environment that values diversity, strengthens inclusivity, and empowers every team member to reach their full potential. Our commitment to equity and equality aligns with our mission to build a culture that reflects our values and promotes the well-being of all team members.

Equity and Equality at Grampian Heart & Health

We interpret equality of opportunity in the most inclusive sense, embracing non-discrimination based on protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex and sexual orientation
- and**
- economic status
- health status
- parenting/caring responsibilities
- part-time/full-time/self-employed/voluntary status
- political or trade union interest or activity
- social background

We are committed to the eradication of all forms of discrimination and prejudice faced by individuals and groups and to the proactive development and implementation of policies and practices, which promote equity and equality of opportunity. We recognise the direct and indirect, the institutional and the individual causes and effects of discrimination. We also recognise the need to address these through both the fulfilment of our legal obligations, the promotion of good practice and through providing a supportive working culture. This is to ensure that the structures, attitudes and behaviours which cause and perpetuate prejudice and discrimination are challenged and dismantled.

We aim to provide equality of opportunity to all in respect of employment, advancement and development on the basis of a person's skills, knowledge, experience and potential. We will do this by promoting a culture that values differences and rewards performance based on merit and by working to remove barriers to recruitment and development.

We aim to provide equality of opportunity to all in respect of the services and activities we deliver. To achieve this, we must ensure that information reach, inclusion and accessibility issues are considered at all stages of planning and delivery.

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging at Grampian Heart & Health

We will work to:

- Recruit, retain and promote individuals from diverse backgrounds. See our Recruitment and Selection policy for more information.
- Offer flexible working opportunities from day one of employment/self-employment where possible.
- Encourage diversity at all levels of the organisation.
- Promote inclusion as a core value, respecting and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Create an environment where individuals feel safe, respected and valued.
- Recognise and celebrate individual and group achievements.
- Ensure facilities and digital resources are accessible to all including those with disabilities or long-term health conditions.
- Make reasonable adjustments and raise awareness that reasonable adjustments are available on request.

Responsibilities

Equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging will not be achieved solely because of the legislation and policy statements. Every team member has a responsibility to treat their colleagues and service users with dignity and respect and to challenge negative behaviours.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring team members are aware of and work within the requirements and values of this policy. These responsibilities include:

- Ensuring team members know that discrimination (both direct and indirect) and harassment will not be tolerated across any of our activities or work venues including social events. Any such incidents will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.
- Challenging, reporting and investigating discriminatory and harassing behaviours.
- Ensuring that equal opportunities policies are followed.
- Living our values and setting a good example to team members.

The Board of Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that every team member has access to appropriate training, learning and development to allow them to carry out the requirements of this policy.

We will work together to ensure that no team member is bullied, harassed or discriminated against during their time working with Grampian Heart & Health including from members of the public.

If a team member feels they have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against they should inform the Services Coordinator. If the complaint is against the Services Coordinator, team members should inform the Chairperson. See the Grampian Heart & Health Grievance or Complaints Policy/Procedures (depending on status e.g. employed, self-employed, volunteer) for further information.

We will offer regular learning opportunities on equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging for all team members.

Employment

We are committed to equity and equality for current and potential team members:

- We will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination from any team member and will take action against those who discriminate.
- We will act within all current legislation, not only in the letter of the law, but also within the spirit of the law.
- We will ensure that all our policies relating to team members comply with equality of opportunity principles.

See our Recruitment & Selection Policy for more information about how we ensure a fair recruitment process is followed.

Job design, recruitment and selection

The design of jobs, working hours and related practices can discriminate directly or indirectly against certain groups. We will ensure that the requirements of individual jobs are designed so that non-essential criteria, which may create a barrier to individuals applying to work for us or which may cause discrimination, are not used. We will work to develop fair and inclusive job descriptions, person specifications and job adverts.

Permanent vacancies will be advertised to allow as many applicants as possible to apply unless there is a need to re-deploy existing team members. All applicants will be judged against the relevant job description/person specification and their potential to do the job. Serious attention will be given to attracting team members from underrepresented or marginalised groups.

To further equality of opportunity, positive action may be taken. See Appendix 1 for a definition and examples of positive action.

Unless positive action is being taken or there is a specific requirement of the job, all appointments will be made on merit regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- We will share interview questions in advance of job interviews.
- We will provide candidates with enough time to apply for advertised jobs and to prepare for interview if shortlisted.

Learning and development

All team members are entitled to the same access to training and development.

Working patterns

All posts will be considered suitable for part-time working or job sharing unless we are unable to make the necessary arrangements to accommodate such requests.

All requests for flexible working, part-time working or job sharing, both from external applicants and current team members, will be considered from day one of employment.

Provision of services

We will work to ensure that our services are relevant and accessible to our audiences and the communities we work in. We will actively promote equality of opportunity in provision of all our classes.

Contractors and suppliers of services

We will seek to ensure that contractors and suppliers of services meet our Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion standards. When external contracts are being negotiated, compliance with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion good practice will be included as a contract condition.

Monitoring and reviewing

New policies, and policies under review will take account of equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. Our written policies will be revised automatically as a result of new legislation and regularly as part of our policies review.

We will undertake regular reviews of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion performance and practice. This will be carried out through data collection, surveys, consultation with appropriate networks, internal review of policies and independent/external evaluation where appropriate.

Any breach of the policy by a team member will be considered a serious matter and the case for disciplinary proceedings will be considered automatically. Complaints should be submitted to the Services Coordinator (or Chairperson, as above) and will be dealt with through our Grievance or Complaints Policy/Procedures, depending on team member status (e.g. employed, self-employed, volunteer).

Complaints received from other organisations or members of the public will be dealt with under our complaints or safeguarding procedures.

APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITIONS

Anti-racist

Anti-racism is the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes that promote racial equity in society.

Direct discrimination

Less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic (see below for definition of protected characteristics).

Disability

The Act defines a disabled person as a person with a disability or long-term health condition. A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Discrimination by association

This refers to discrimination against a person who does not have a protected characteristic but who feels they have been discriminated against because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception

This refers to discrimination against a person who does not have a protected characteristic but who feels they have been discriminated against because of a perception that they have a protected characteristic.

Equality of opportunity

The proactive and informed eradication and prevention of individual and institutional discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, economic status, health status, parenting/caring responsibilities, political and / or trade union interest or activity and social background.

Harassment

Unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Indirect discrimination

The use of an apparently neutral practice, provision or criterion which puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic and applying the practice, provision or criterion cannot be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Institutionalised discrimination

"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people in different equality groups. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance,

thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage equality groups.” Scottish Executive Equality Strategy 2000

Institutionalised Racism

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.” MacPherson Report

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is the incorporation of equal opportunities into all policy development, programmes, procedures and service delivery of an organisation. It is a strategically driven process for ensuring that the Equal Opportunities policy is not a static paperbound document but a living breathing one which positively embraces cultural diversity. Mainstreaming promotes equality as a core business of the organisation which impacts positively on all aspects of work.

Positive action

Refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantages (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs. Appropriate positive action includes:

- placing job adverts to target particular groups to increase the number of applicants from that group.
- including statements in job adverts to encourage applications from under-represented groups such as ‘we welcome female applicants’.
- offering training or internships to help certain groups get opportunities or progress at work.
- offering shadowing or mentoring to groups with particular needs.
- hosting an open day specifically for under-represented groups to encourage them to get into a particular field.
- favouring the job candidate from an under-represented group, where two candidates are ‘as qualified as’ each other.

Protected characteristics

These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Victimisation

Victimisation is when a person is treated badly because they have made a complaint about discrimination or have given evidence in a discrimination case.

White privilege

Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterised by racial inequality and injustice.