

The Mount Camphill Community

Equality and Diversity Policy

Purpose

This document outlines The Mount Camphill Community's approach to equality and diversity. It provides guidance for everyone within the community (co-workers, trainee co-workers, house coordinators, tutors, employed colleagues, cohousers and students) on the standards they can expect from The Mount as a living and working environment, as a further education college/ residential home and cohousing community. In all aspects The Mount strives to deliver a high quality experience to its students and cohousers.

Equality of opportunity is an integral part of the mission of The Mount where we take appropriate steps to advance equality of opportunity and accommodate the requirements with respect to the different strands outlined by the Equalities Act.

We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments.

The purpose of this document is to set out how our practice and policies can address discrimination, promote inclusive practice, celebrate diversity and ensure that those in our community requiring extra support receive it. The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and social deprivation.

At The Mount we value the diverse nature of students, cohousers and all coworkers, tutors and volunteers; we ensure that this is reflected in all our practices, policies and services. Our commitment to equality involves much more than positive action to promote equal opportunities and eradicate discrimination, it means that we are actively committed to encouraging and promoting the value brought to the organisation by the diverse nature of students, cohousers and all living and working at The Mount. The following commitment according to this policy is required by all living and working at The Mount, trustees, cohousers and students.

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination whether intentional, unintentional or institutional
- To create a culture among all living and working at The Mount, cohousers, trustees and students where equality and diversity is at the heart of all our activities and that trustees, all living and working at The Mount, cohousers and students are actively involved in the development and application of policies and practice
- To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of college and community life.

Context

Our statutory duties are contained within:

The Equality Act 2010

Equality Act 2006 (which introduced the gender equality duty)

Human Rights Act 1998

Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000

Care Act 2014

Children and Families Act 2014

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Principles

“Only the help from Man to Man – the encounter of Ego to Ego – the awareness of the other man’s individuality without inquiring into his creed or his world concept or political affiliations, but simply the meeting, eye to eye, of two individuals – only this creates the kind of human meeting which may counter and heal the threat to the inner man.”

Karl König / Founder of Camphill

The Mount is committed to the principle of eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability or age (the protected characteristics).

The Mount is also committed to the fostering of good relations and to encourage people with a protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low.

Everyone has the right to experience wellbeing, which is outlined in the Care Act in the following way:

‘Wellbeing’ is a broad concept and is relating to the following areas in particular:

Personal dignity; physical, mental and emotional wellbeing; protection from abuse and neglect; control by the individual over everyday life; participation in work, education, training and recreation; social and economic wellbeing; domestic, family and personal relationships; suitability of living accommodation; the individual’s contribution to society.

Promoting wellbeing means actively seeking improvements in the aspects of wellbeing set out by the above definition when carrying out care and support functions relating to an individual. This is known as working according the wellbeing principle.

The experience of wellbeing, as described above, is a principle The Mount wishes to foster for all students, cohousers and all living and working at The Mount.

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone working and living at The Mount involved with either home life or education as well as those supporting these areas of involvement of The Mount have a responsibility for implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure and promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of their work and life.

This policy applies to all living and working at The Mount as well as cohousers, students and trustees as mentioned above. Furthermore it applies to contractors, consultants, volunteers, visitors and job applicants.

The Management Group is responsible for promoting equal opportunities on behalf of The Mount, and for seeing that effective policies and procedures are in place to ensure and continuously improve the quality of equal opportunities throughout the community.

The Management Group is responsible to the Trustees for ensuring that equal opportunities are embedded, continually promoted and comprehensively implemented in all aspects of The Mount’s activities.

This responsibility extends to job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment and contracts.

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The Management Group is responsible for promoting, monitoring and implementation of all aspects of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure relating to the employment of staff.

Procedures

The Mount will endeavour to ensure that the following good practice informs the actions of living and working at The Mount as well as cohousers and students at all times.

The Mount seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for everyone in relation to all of its activities.

The Mount recognises the existence of discrimination, and is committed to making changes in any area of the community's practice where there is evidence of failure to provide an appropriate and professional service. It is committed to addressing areas of institutional failure, in relation to issues of religion, racism, gender, sexism, ageism, disability, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity leave, gender reassignment, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or other inequalities.

Recruitment and Selection (see also Recruitment Policy)

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate.

We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market and, where appropriate, use may be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably-qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made.

Staff Training and Promotion

Training needs are identified through annual appraisal meetings.

All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to develop their capability as well as to benefit the community.

Student/ Supported Cohouser Admissions

The Mount will ensure that all prospective students/ supported cohousers are accorded equal opportunity in matters relating to enrolment and their learning/ living experience.

Termination of Employment

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

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Disability Discrimination

Disabled members of staff or someone who has become disabled, should feel encouraged to tell us (their supervisor, senior co-worker, the coordinators) about their condition so that we can support as appropriate.

If difficulties at work are experienced because of disability, we will discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled staff, job applicants or students at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled students, cohousers and anyone living and working at The Mount.

Breaches of this policy

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against or subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter with your Supervisor or one of the Management Group.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated in accordance with our complaints procedure. Anyone living and working at The Mount who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under The Mount's Disciplinary Procedure. Anyone living and working at The Mount who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.

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Annexes

Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

- **Direct Discrimination** - This occurs when a person is treated unfairly or less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. Apart from limited exceptions to the general prohibition of discrimination, direct discrimination is automatically unlawful, whatever the reason for it. There can be no justification for the difference in treatment
- **Associative Discrimination** – This occurs where a person is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another person who has a protected characteristic. This applies to the characteristics of Race, Religion or belief, Sexual Orientation, Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment,
- **Discrimination by Perception** -This occurs where a person is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that the person has a particular protected characteristic, when in fact they do not (the exception to this is marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity as it is not covered).
- **Indirect Discrimination** – This occurs where a provision, criteria or practice is applied that appears to affect everyone equally but which in fact puts people who share a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- **Harassment** – This occurs when someone behaves in such a way that their conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an environment that is offensive, hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating for a person where this is related to a protected characteristic (except pregnancy and maternity or marriage or civil partnerships)
- **Victimisation** – is also prohibited. This occurs when a person experiences disadvantage because they have supported someone in making a complaint or an allegation of discrimination or because they personally have made an allegation of discrimination.