

The Bamford Community Society

Equality & Diversity Policy

First produced on	Sept 2013
Approved on	September 15th 2016
Approved by	Board of Directors – see minutes
To be reviewed no later than	September 2017

1. Policy statement

The Bamford Community Society Ltd is a registered society under the Co-operatives and Community Benefit Society Act 2014 and is owned by its members, the majority of whom are residents of the village of Bamford. The Society operates from the Anglers Rest site within Bamford village, in the Derbyshire Peak District and delivers various services for the benefit of residents of Bamford, the wider Hope Valley and visitors to the area. The BCS is a socially responsible business committed to commercial success whilst upholding the highest standards with regards to business operations. This policy forms part of those standards of good practice.

The BCS recognises that some groups and individuals can suffer from discrimination. The Society recognises the need to support and promote equality of opportunity and the diversity of members, staff and customers. It is our intention to ensure that nobody receives less favourable treatment from us or agents acting on our behalf on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender reassignment, social status, political, cultural or religious beliefs.

In working to eliminate discrimination, unfairness, inequality and disadvantage we will take practical action developing initiatives and interventions to promote and value diversity at all levels of the organisation. As an organisation we actively recognise and manage diversity in the workplace in a strategic way, looking at innovative ways of empowering the workforce and supporting a culture of openness, integrity and honesty.

As all forms of discrimination and harassment are totally unacceptable to us, we have adopted the following equality and diversity policy which should be read in tandem with the Society's Recruitment Policy and Grievance Policy.

We will ensure that all our staff and members of the Board of Directors and its subcommittees are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the promotion of equal opportunities and valuing diversity and that they are properly equipped to take account of the different needs of particular groups and thus make provision for those groups, working positively towards the overall goal of the organisation.

2. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

2.1. Legislation and best practice

The BCS believes that it is essential to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations, equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in all areas of our operations. We accept and endorse our legal responsibilities as laid out in a variety of legislation which includes, amongst others:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970 & 1983.
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975,
- The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002,
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the DDA Act 2004.
- The Human Rights Act 1998,
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997,
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999,
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003,
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, and
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

Our policy, however, goes further than the law, as it currently stands. It accepts our moral responsibility for promoting and working towards ensuring equality of opportunity and equity for all. It accepts our social responsibility to be an employer of first choice by valuing and respecting differences in people within the organisation. It accepts our business responsibility to work towards meeting the overall objectives and goals of the organisation in a holistic way.

We are committed to being an equal opportunities organisation which values diversity and to the following practices:

- a) In the employment of staff and provision of services we will seek to actively promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.
- b) No person or groups of people applying for employment with the BCS, or serving on our Board of Directors or its sub-committees, will be treated less favourably because of their gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender reassignment, social status, political, cultural or religious beliefs.
- c) In hiring contractors, consultants and other agencies, we will maintain our commitments to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity by ensuring those we work with are equally committed to valuing equality and diversity.

2.2. Roles and Responsibilities for ensuring equality and diversity

The BCS Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for ensuring that good employment and staff management practices are adopted which promote the ownership and understanding of diversity throughout the organisation and for ensuring that this policy is implemented across the organisation. This policy will be reviewed annually following consultation with staff and members on proposed changes. The Chair of the Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that members of the board and senior managers of the BCS act within the terms of the policy at all time and that a breach of the policy is considered a disciplinary offence for staff and a breach of the code of conduct for Directors.

To ensure that the Board of Directors is fit for purpose and able to properly implement and uphold to equality and diversity policy, the Board is democratically elected by the members of the Society on an annual basis. If the democratic process fails to achieve an appropriate balance of members to reflect the make-up of the Bamford community, the Board will give consideration to using the provision within its rules to co-opt up to two additional Board Members in order to redress the balance.

Line Managers within the BCS

Line managers (including the named Director responsible for managing the senior executive within the staff team) are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented with regards to all matters pertaining to staffing. This includes:

Recruitment, Selection and Employment

- ensuring the recruitment of the best possible staff to manage and deliver the organisations services.
- ensuring that recruitment to all vacancies for permanent positions is carried out in accordance with our recruitment policy.
- ensuring that any recruitment agencies used on have equality and diversity policies and practices that are consistent with our own.
- ensuring that all advertisements are clear and unambiguous so that applicants will be able to determine their own suitability for employment.
- ensuring that all advertisements make clear our commitment to equal opportunities and valuing diversity in the workplace by stating that: “We are committed to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity so positively welcome applications from all sections of the community.”
- ensuring that recruitment does not artificially restrict the number of applicants from any particular group, encouraging applications from previously under-represented groups.
- ensuring that every post has a job description and person specification, as required by our recruitment policy and to ensure that all criteria are strictly justifiable requirements for the post.
- ensuring that the criteria for shortlisting are consistently applied to all applicants and that the short-listing panel do not have access to data on candidates collected purely for monitoring purposes.

- ensuring that the application process tests only those skills, qualities and attributes that are a genuine requirement of the job.
- ensuring that in determining whether or not to accept or reject a candidate, interviewers will only consider factors relevant to the job; the criteria applied to the selection of successful candidates shall be only those listed in the job description and person specification.

Staff Training and Development

Line managers should:

- ensure that diversity issues are covered as part of the induction programme for all new members of staff.
- ensure that any staff and board members involved in recruitment have been inducted in this equality and diversity policy.
- ensure that all staff and board and sub-committee members are given training on equal opportunities issues, diversity, diversity awareness and diversity management.
- ensure that opportunities for training and development are given equally to staff members on a fair and equitable basis.

Ongoing Line Management Responsibilities

Line managers should ensure at all times that staff are aware that the use of sexist, racist, homophobic or ageist language, as well as general derogatory comments about a person's physical appearance, is unacceptable and the use of such language will be considered a disciplinary offence.

Line managers should also ensure that they avoid positive discrimination except where this is specifically permitted under Section 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and/or Section 5(2)(D) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and that they do not discriminate in favour of or against a particular ethnic group or in favour of or against women or men except where this is permitted as a genuine occupational qualification under Section 7 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and/or Section 5 of the Race Relations Act 1976.

Line managers should undertake to make reasonable adjustments to working environment and specific job functions in order to enable a disabled person to be able to undertake a particular job function.

2.3. The BCS' responsibilities as a provider of services for the community

The Society is committed to ensuring that any person who uses our services receives equal treatment.

To do this we will ensure that our premises and facilities meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

We will also ensure that the Board of Directors, employees, contractors, consultants and other bodies who work for us are committed to equal opportunities, valuing diversity and good practice through the appropriate mechanisms, including code of conduct (for the Board of Directors) and their contractual requirements for other stakeholders.

2.4. Complaints and breaches of this policy

Complaints concerning breaches of the Society's commitment to equality and diversity will be treated seriously by the Society and properly investigated and reported to the Board of Directors.

Members of staff should use the grievance procedure contained within their contract of employment to raise any complaints.

Members of the co-operative and of the general public (including applicants for employment) should raise their complaints using the Society's formal complaints procedures.

The BCS is committed to ensuring that our equality and diversity policy is effectively implemented. Allegations of discrimination or harassment by or about members of staff or contractors, consultants working on our behalf will be taken seriously and be fully investigated. If proven, appropriate action will be taken under the terms of the relevant contract.