


BGNS	Care Scheme Equality and Diversity Policy	 The logo for Blunham Good Neighbour Scheme features a stylized house with a red roof and a white chimney. Inside the house, there are three colorful figures (yellow, blue, and purple) holding hands. Below the house, the text "BLUNHAM GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME" is written in red.
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1. General Statement

1.1. The Group named above is committed to achieving equal opportunities in the services it provides. No volunteer or service user of the Group should receive less favourable treatment because of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

1.2. As a provider of a service to the community, the Group accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

1.3. It is the responsibility of all volunteers and service users to ensure that no volunteer or service user receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated in Para. 1.1 of this policy.

1.4. The Group recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with the Group's Equal Opportunities Policy. The Group will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be

adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.

1.5. The steering committee of the Group will review this policy every three years.

2. Responsibility

2.1. The steering committee of the Group has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all volunteers and service users

have a duty as part of their involvement with the Group to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

2.2. The Group will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

2.3. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in the group's projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the group's Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as Group volunteers.

2.4. Every effort will be made to ensure that the services offered by the Group reflect the composition of the community it serves. The Group is committed to encouraging access from under-represented groups.

2.5. If any volunteer or service user feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the steering committee.

2.6. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

2.7. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

3. Disabled Access

3.1. The Group will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

4. Use of Language

4.1. Volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles:

- disabled groups and/or individuals with special needs
- any race, culture or religion
- a person's sexual orientation
- women and/or men.

4.2. Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

4.3. All materials used or developed by the Group will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

5. Sexual Harassment

5.1. No volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

5.2. This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse
- physical contact
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

5.3. If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the volunteer or service user who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

6. Equal Opportunities Monitoring

6.1. The steering committee will monitor the Group's equal opportunities progress, development and practice.