

# Equal Opportunities Policy

Culpeper Community Garden Association

*Agreed by the Trustees: February 7th, 2024*

*Review cycle: Every 3 years*

*Next review due by: February 7th, 2027*

## **1.0 Our Statement on Equal Opportunities**

- 1.1 Culpeper Community Garden is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. Discrimination is illegal [Equality Act 2010]. We will take positive action in support of inclusion. We celebrate diversity.
- 1.2 Culpeper Community Garden will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:
  - Race
  - Colour
  - Gender
  - Gender Reassignment
  - Sexual orientation or identity
  - Ethnic or national origin
  - Disability
  - Partnership status or home responsibility, including carers
  - Health condition, including HIV or AIDS status
  - Age
  - Political or religious belief
  - Trade union activity
  - Socio-economic background
  - Refugee or asylum seeker status
- 1.3 As a provider of a service to the community, Culpeper Community Garden [the Garden] 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.
- 1.4 The Garden recognises that some users of its services, especially those who we support due to their additional needs, may say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Equal Opportunities Policy. The Garden will do all it can to challenge and change such behaviour.
- 1.5 In cases where intervention is possible, a considered approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the person who has been subjected to discriminatory behaviour.

Ultimately, perpetrators of discrimination will be excluded if all efforts to challenge and change their behaviour are to no avail.

1.6 The Garden realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- The Garden will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly when recruiting staff. We will ensure our recruitment practices are accessible and inclusive.
- The Garden will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practice through which it carries out its work. This involves the development of greater diversity in the management committee, staff, volunteers, networks and membership, to ensure a genuinely wide representation that reflects the community we serve. We will take positive action in respect of this.

## **2.0 Responsibility**

- 2.1 The committee of the Garden has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. This includes ensuring that all staff, volunteers, service users and members understand and uphold this policy.
- 2.2 All members, staff, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Culpeper to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.
- 2.3 Those responsible for recruiting members and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the Garden's Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as Culpeper volunteers.
- 2.4 The Garden will bring to the attention of all members, staff, 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.
- 2.5 If any member, volunteer or service user feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are encouraged to pursue the matter by raising their concerns with a trusted member of staff, or with the Chair of the garden if the concern relates to a member of staff.
- 2.6 All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously and recorded as part of our incident monitoring procedure.
- 2.7 The garden reserves the right to pursue disciplinary action with or without the victim's consent.

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

### **3.0 Access**

3.1 The Garden will take positive action to ensure that all our premises are as accessible as possible for as many people as possible.

3.2 When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

3.3 We will do all we can to make reasonable adjustments as and when these are identified. We are also aware that this can extend to our activities in the electronic realm.

### **4.0 Use of Language**

4.1 Staff, members and volunteers should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, reinforces or perpetrates discrimination.

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 will be taken if they persist with it. This will be in line with our Disciplinary Policy.

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

### **5.0 Sexual and other forms of Harassment**

5.1 No staff member, garden member, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual and/or other forms of harassment.

5.2 This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour including:

- verbal abuse, especially that of a sexual nature
- unwelcome physical contact
- remarks which an individual finds offensive
- excluding and demeaning behaviours towards someone due to their protected characteristics.

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

## **6.0 Monitoring and Review**

- 6.1 The Policy will be constantly reviewed by the management committee to ensure that no one involved in Culpeper is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff and volunteers, the member organisation, the composition of the Committees and the provision of services.
- 6.2 Incidences of discrimination and our response will be recorded through our incident report system.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.
- 6.4 The committee of the Garden will review this policy whenever legislation changes or after 3 years, whichever is earliest.