Grief support for
children & young people
in Swindon & Wiltshire

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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0.2.0	22/06/2023	S.Gillam	22/11/2023	Standardise format
0.2.1	28/10/2025	K.Brownlee	12/11/2025	Good Change of title from Equal Opportunities, Equality & Diversity Policy. Unlawful discrimination examples expanded. Statement added about flexible use of resources to promote equity of outcomes.
0.2.2	29/10/2026	K.Brownlee	11/11/2026	Good Considered title of Equality or Equity. Agreed to keep title as Equality as we work towards an aspiration of Equity.
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1. Charity Statements:

Statement of public benefit:
Wiltshire Treehouse is for the benefit of bereaved children, young people, and their families, living/educated within Swindon & Wiltshire.

Mission:
Wiltshire Treehouse wants to see a world where every bereaved child and young person can receive guidance and support to help them through their grieving process. We will enable those in our local communities to develop the coping strategies, skills, and confidence they need to thrive.

Charity Objectives:
Provide high quality, relevant bereavement support and guidance to children, young people & their families.
Improve the initial experience of a child bereavement through training and awareness raising.
Secure the continuity of our organisation, ensuring a future of child specific bereavement support.
Be proud of the charity, a great place to work and achieve.

Our Values:
Growth – Providing a safe space for personal development.
Respect – Beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff are treated with respect and dignity within their journey with the charity.
Inclusivity – Services and support available to the whole community.
Empowerment – Working with beneficiaries to enable change on their terms.
Friendly – Open and welcoming.

2. Purpose, Scope, and Users:

The purpose of this policy is to communicate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion within services and employment, with the aims of ensuring that all employees, Beneficiaries (Children, young people and their families, professionals), volunteers, Trustees and job applicants are treated fairly and equally, whilst supporting the Wiltshire Treehouse Charity's objective of providing a working environment that is free from all forms of discrimination.

The policy applies to all Beneficiaries and staff within the Charity, including employees and other workers, such as volunteers, and trustees, temporary workers, and contractors. All staff are expected to put this policy into practice.

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all employees and can also be found in the Employee File kept at the central office and will be made available to other workers on their engagement. Job seekers and applicants can access the policy on request. In addition, all employees will receive a briefing on this policy during their training.

Any questions about the policy should be directed to admin@wiltshiretreehouse.org.uk
The Trustee body has been consulted and has agreed the contents of this policy. This policy does not form part of employees' contracts of employment and the Company may amend it at any time.

This policy is reviewed annually and may be amended at any time.

3. Policy Statement:

The charity will provide equality of opportunity to all beneficiaries and is fully committed to providing equality within the workplace for all employees as described above. Equality of opportunities will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marital or civil

partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics).

To meet the diverse needs of our beneficiaries, Wiltshire Treehouse will use its resources as sensitively and flexibly as possible. Where an individual requires a level or type of support beyond what the charity can provide alone, we will actively seek to work in partnership with other organisations to ensure the best possible outcome.

Wiltshire Treehouse aims to create a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all staff, volunteers and beneficiaries are treated with dignity and respect.

The Charity will oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy
- leave for parents
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities

All decisions will be made fairly and objectively. We are committed, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensuring that our policies, procedures and working practices are applied consistently and equitably. Where these may create barriers or disadvantages for individuals or groups, we will take reasonable steps to remove or minimise those barriers, promote equality of opportunity, and maintain transparency in our decision-making processes.

4. Specific Responsibilities

The Charity has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation and for observing relevant Codes of Practice.

The Trustee body is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and for ensuring that all employment-related policies, procedures and practices adhere to this policy.
All staff have a responsibility not to discriminate or harass other staff, volunteers, or beneficiaries and to report any such behaviour of which they become aware to the Service Director, Business Director, or the Chair of Trustees.

Directors and Trustees are responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy and must apply the policy as part of their day-to-day management of the Charity. Directors and Trustees will receive specific training in this policy.

The charity requests that beneficiaries and their families always treat representatives of Wiltshire Treehouse with respect and dignity. There will be zero tolerance for antisocial or abusive behaviour, any representatives of Wiltshire Treehouse that encounter such behaviour should report this immediately to their line manager.

5. Reference Documents:

Equality Act 2010

Disability discrimination Act 1995
https://www.acas.org.uk/equality-policy-template

6. Forms of discrimination

The following are forms of discrimination that this policy aims to avoid:

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. Direct discrimination can also occur by way of association, which is when a person is treated less favourably because, for example, their spouse or partner or other relative has the protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in that way has the right to complain.

To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate business reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.

Victimisation occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because he/she has raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action, in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination, against the Company or because he/she has supported someone else in doing this.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable.
Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they nonetheless find unpleasant.

Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to a protected characteristic it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.

Discrimination arising from Disability - In addition to the above, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified. Furthermore, employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled applicants, employees or other workers are not substantially disadvantaged.

7. Creating equal opportunities in the workplace

There are several ways in which the Charity aims to ensure equal opportunities in the workplace, including:

8. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection procedures will be free from bias or discrimination. Recruitment procedures will be conducted objectively and will be based upon specific and reasonable job-related criteria. Decisions regarding an individual's suitability for a particular role will be based on skills, education and experience. Where required Wiltshire Treehouse will make appropriate reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that disabled applicants are not substantially disadvantaged.

Wherever possible, vacancies will be advertised as suitable for flexible working.

Where required for a role, the charity will consider taking appropriate positive action to enable or encourage applications from persons with a protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the organisation.

9. Career development and training

All staff will be given an appropriate induction to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role.
All employees will be encouraged to develop their full potential and we will not unreasonably deny an employee access to training or other career development opportunities. These will be identified as part of an ongoing performance management process and will be determined objectively, taking into account the needs of the business and available resources.
Selection for promotion will be based on objective criteria and decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

10. Terms and conditions

Our terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly, and benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff who should have access to them, as appropriate.
The Charity operates a pay and benefits system that is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias to ensure that all employees are rewarded fairly for their contribution and loyalty.
Terms and conditions of employment for part-time employees will be provided on a pro-rata basis to full-time employees. Similarly, the terms and conditions for fixed term employees will be comparable with those given to permanent employees, except when different treatment can be objectively justified.

11. Employment policies and practices

The Charity aims to ensure that employment policies and practices, including any rules or requirements, do not directly or indirectly discriminate and are applied in a non-discriminatory manner. We will ensure that all disciplinary decisions are fair and consistent and that selection for redundancy is based on objective criteria.
The Charity will make appropriate reasonable adjustments to the working environment or any work arrangements that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage these cause disabled staff.
We will aim as far as reasonably practicable to accommodate the requirements of different religions and cultures and will consider requests from employees to vary or change their working hours to enable them to care for a dependant.

12. Working environment

All individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and the Charity takes reasonable steps to protect staff from discrimination, bullying or harassment and, in the event of a complaint, we will take appropriate action to prevent, as far as possible, a further occurrence.

All staff are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour at work or that occurs during employment, on or off premises, including at work social events (whether organised by the Charity or not) or at formal or informal events involving staff, customers or other work-related contacts.

Wiltshire Treehouse will endeavour to provide an accessible working environment, in line with The Equality Act 2010: Reasonable adjustments will be made to avoid you being put at a disadvantage compared to others in the workplace. For example, adjusting your working hours or providing you with a special piece of equipment to help you do the job.

13. Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The Charity will monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.
As part of this process we monitor:

- the composition of job applicants and decisions in recruitment
- the composition of our workforce
- access to training, promotion and other opportunities and benefits
- the impact of our employment policies, including use of the disciplinary and grievance procedure
- dismissals and other terminations

Information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

14. Raising a complaint of discrimination

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you should raise the matter in accordance with the Charity's Grievance Procedure. A copy of the Grievance Procedure can be found in the Employee Folder.

Any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, or breached this policy in any other way, will be subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, up to and including dismissal. Non–employees will be subject to appropriate formal action that may, depending on the circumstances, involve terminating any contract or agreement.

The Charity will also take seriously any malicious or, in its opinion, unwarranted allegations of discrimination and will take appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise, where necessary

15. Equal opportunities for beneficiaries

Wiltshire Treehouse recognises that everyone is different and will experience loss and bereavement in different ways. We do not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity.

We will tailor our support taking into consideration the beliefs of individuals (i.e., religious beliefs). We believe that children and their families should be fully involved in discussion about the services and groups the charity provides. Full participation by families in the planning and evaluation of services is encouraged with opportunities for individuals and families to feedback are provided following interventions and at the conclusion of a bereavement support program, in addition, there is also de-brief/feedback time included within the bereavement program, ensuring that we hear the voices of our beneficiaries in a variety of ways. Our anonymised evaluations are used to improve our own practise and the development of legislation, policy and practice which supports a genuine partnership between families and the agencies working with them.

Due to the emotive nature of our work, all beneficiaries are self-referred. Initial enquiries are received by families, and an assessment is completed with the whole family prior to participation within a group session. Bereavement support is commenced at the request of the individual/family, and not done under duress or enforcement by another service.

Wiltshire Treehouse acknowledges and accepts differences in society and affirms its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for those seeking to use the services. The charity aims to be sensitive to the needs of beneficiaries and will respect their backgrounds in relation to age, gender, race/culture, physical, learning difficulties and mental health issues, religion, and sexual orientation. Wiltshire Treehouse's publications and resources seek to reflect the diversity of potential beneficiaries.

In line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Equality Act 2010 , Wiltshire Treehouse endeavours to provide an accessible building and service to all beneficiaries. Where possible the charity will make the necessary reasonable adjustments to ensure fair use of facilities for all.