



31 LVC Equal Opportunities Policy

Approved by Harry McCarthy and Amaka Mercy Okonkwo

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Statement of policy

The LVC recognises that in our society certain individuals and groups of people are unfairly discriminated against, both directly and indirectly. They are denied equality of opportunity on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age (does not apply to a person under 16)
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community.

or a combination of any of these. We strive to eliminate all such forms of discrimination and to create a climate in which equal opportunities are promoted as a means of developing the full potential of everyone who is involved with our organisation. We do this by fulfilling our legal obligations and by taking positive action which goes beyond the requirements of the law, but by avoiding stereotyping and tokenism.

1. General principles

1.1 Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of equal opportunities at the LVC. We are always seeking ways in which we can improve our record on equal opportunities.

1.2 Responsibility

The LVC Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary management committee members) are expected to facilitate this process.

1.3 Measures

These procedures list the measures that must be taken in order to fulfill the policy. They must be adhered to at all times. If they are breached, the appropriate procedures (e.g.



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complaints, grievance or disciplinary) may be used to resolve the problem and to make improvements. Anyone who chooses to take such action will not be penalised by the organisation or treated less favourably as a result.

2. Employment practice

2.1 General

The LVC has a public role and we recognise that the services we deliver should ideally be performed by workers who are representative of the diverse community in which we operate. In order to achieve this, the LVC aims to be an equal opportunities employer; optimising on available human resources and ensuring fairness to potential and actual employees.

2.2 Recruitment

LVC staff are recruited and selected on objective criteria that test the relevant skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and personal qualities necessary for posts. No applicants are placed at a disadvantage by requirements which are not genuine occupational qualifications, as this would constitute indirect discrimination. This does not preclude the setting of certain legitimate limits and exclusions, however. Examples are a retirement age of 65, banning those with a criminal record of abuse from working with vulnerable groups of people, not employing immigrants without work permits, etc. Job vacancies are advertised as widely as possible and make reference to the operation of an equal opportunities policy to which staff are expected to adhere.

2.3 Training

We provide training opportunities to all our staff to meet their training needs. If appropriate, this may include assertiveness training for those individuals who have little confidence as a result of belonging to a disadvantaged group. All members of staff receive suitable and relevant equal opportunities training and are provided with a copy of this document.

2.4 Other conditions of employment

(Further details of these are found in the LVC staff policies and procedures document.)

The LVC is open to flexible working arrangements, such as job sharing, part-timing, flexi-timing, career development initiatives, etc., which enable members of staff to juggle their competing time demands more efficiently. The LVC is sensitive to the time and other constraints under which people operate as a result of their socio-economic situation and cultural background. Meetings, events and the like, are arranged as far as practicable in a way that takes into consideration the needs of current and potential staff members (in terms of timing of meetings, childcare arrangements, religious holidays, etc.). All service conditions are reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not discriminate against any particular group and instead provide for the varying needs of the staff team

3. Volunteers working at the LVC

3.1 Overview

The positive and open attitude towards recruitment, selection and day-to-day treatment of LVC staff is also extended to LVC volunteers and the conditions described above therefore also apply to management committee volunteers and other volunteers. The LVC expects its volunteers to share its commitment to equal opportunities and ensures that each one receives a copy of this document. (Further information is given in the LVC



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volunteer policy and procedures document.)

3.2 Adapting to volunteers' needs

We actively look for ways in which we can achieve adequate representation amongst our volunteers, in terms of the community in which we operate. We will only be successful in attracting a wide range of people if we adapt to the needs of individual volunteers. The LVC is able to be much more flexible with volunteers than it can be with paid staff, for example by changing a role description to suit a volunteer's interests and abilities.

4. The work of the organisation

4.1 Our work with volunteers

The LVC believes that everyone has the right to volunteer and to have equal access to volunteering opportunities, without experiencing discrimination. We also wish the organisations with which we work to benefit from a true mix of available volunteers and we therefore closely monitor the potential volunteers who register with us. Our 'matching' service will try to redress any apparent imbalances, by using initiatives to target volunteers from underrepresented groups.

4.2 Our work with volunteer-involving organisations

The LVC provides a variety of services to organisations that are run by, which involve, or which wish to involve volunteers. We will consider assisting and working with any such organisation, provided that its ethos and operations do not contravene LVC policy. In addition, we actively seek to work with a very broad range of organisations, so that potential volunteers for the 'matching' service have as wide a choice of volunteering options as possible.

4.3 Publicity

In order to bring our message to volunteers, organisations and the general public, we publicise the LVC as widely as resources will allow, using as many media as possible. We aim to be inclusive by using positive imagery of, and making reference to, all types of people. The language in our publications is clear and non-discriminatory. We publicise our commitment to equal opportunities whenever appropriate. A copy of this document is available to anyone who requests it.

4.4 Premises, facilities and equipment

The LVC strives to make the physical environment in which we operate as attractive and user-friendly as possible for everyone; volunteers, staff and visitors. This mainly involves the LVC office, but also premises elsewhere used for any LVC events and meetings. Healthy and safe conditions for everyone are of paramount. Special provisions, such as wheelchair access and extended opening hours, are made for people with special needs wherever viable.

5. Dealing with harassment

5.1 Our approach

The LVC is committed to social justice and equality and believes that everyone involved with the organisation has the right to freedom from harassment, whether this is on the basis of disability, race, sex, sexual orientation or any other grounds. The LVC does not condone any harassment whatsoever, whether it is verbal, written, physical, sexual, to person or property, intentional or not. Any such harassment, abuse or victimisation will be dealt with severely and quickly, using the disciplinary procedure in the case of a



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member of staff and any other appropriate form of action with anyone else.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

6.1 Success of policy

The LVC monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its equal opportunities policy and procedures on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements. It also studies its other policies and procedures to see that they do not operate against this policy and can be improved in terms of equal opportunities. The LVC is always on the lookout for new ideas to improve the equal opportunities performance of the organisation.

6.2 Feedback

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the LVC Manager who will ensure that the management committee considers it.

6.3 Review

This document will be reviewed by the management committee on an annual basis, or sooner if circumstances change.