

# Bexley United Charities

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### 1 Statement of Policy

- 1.1 The trustees of Bexley United Charities (the Charities) are committed to promoting equality and diversity within the Charities' policies, practices and procedures.
- 1.2 The Charities and its trustees will treat all individuals equally regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**).
- 1.3 The trustees of the Charities recognise their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (see the Appendix). This applies to all aspects of the Charities' work and is promoted through the following values:
  - Openness by encouraging and supporting new ideas that will improve the service that we provide;
  - Showing respect towards each other and those we interact with;
  - Honesty by working in an ethical way;
  - Caring with dignity and respect for the individual; and
  - Supporting individuals to develop equality and diversity awareness and understanding.

### 2 Discrimination

- 2.1 The trustees will not accept discrimination or harassment by or against those who work with, are supported by or interact with the Charities in their activities.
- 2.2 The Charities are restricted under the Charity Commission Scheme of 1 April 1980 (as amended) only provide almshouse accommodation for "poor people of good character who are inhabitants of the London Borough of Bexley". Subject only to these restrictions, the trustees do not discriminate or treat individuals less favourably because of any Protected Characteristics.
- 2.3 The Charities do not discriminate on the grounds of disability and will, where possible, take all reasonable measures to accommodate the needs of residents, staff and volunteers with disabilities, subject to the limitations of the accommodation available and the resources of the Charities.
- 2.4 The appointment of residents to the almshouse accommodation and the recruitment of employees will always be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

- 2.5 This policy relates to all residents, trustees, staff and visitors. Every person who interacts with the Charities should feel equally welcome.

### **3 Implementation of the policy**

- 3.1 The trustees of the Charities are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.
- 3.2 The Charities has designated the Clerk to the Trustees as the person who takes lead responsibility for equality and diversity.

### **4 Breaches of the policy**

- 4.1 The trustees of the Charities will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind. Complaints of discrimination or harassment will be taken seriously and investigated.
- 4.2 Any individual(s) who feel that they have suffered or witnessed any form of discrimination should follow the Charities complaints procedure as set out in the Complaints Policy.

### **5 Related policies and procedures**

This policy does not work in isolation and should be read in conjunction with:

- Residents' individual Letters of Appointment (the Licence)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Residents Handbook
- Complaints Policy

**This policy has been approved for issue by the Board of Trustees:**

## Appendix

The Equality Act 2010 includes an exception for charities. This allows charities under certain circumstances to restrict benefits to people with a particular Protected Characteristic (but not a group defined by colour) if the restriction already appears in the charity's governing document.

### Equality Act 2010 – Definitions

**Age:** An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

**Disability:** A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Gender reassignment:** A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

**Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin:** A race can mean a person's colour, or nationality (including your citizenship). It can also mean a person's ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as their current nationality.

**Religion or belief:** Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion. A religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief, such as Protestants and Catholics within Christianity.

**Sexual Orientation:** A person has the protected characteristics if they are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual or if they are perceived to have a particular sexual orientation or a person is connected to someone who has a particular sexual orientation.

**Sex:** People having the protected characteristic of sex being a man or a woman, and that men share this characteristic with other men, and women with other women.