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## **Equalities and Diversity Policy and Commitment**

This document sets out our policy in respect of equalities and diversity issues, and our commitment to promoting equalities for all people and valuing positive attitudes towards diversity in all that we do. We believe that it is right to combat any form of unfair discrimination against any individual or group from any section of our community.

The statement addresses seven strands of equalities practice:

- Age
- Gender, including gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Class

All organisations have duties from legislation to:

- Eliminate racial and disability discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote positive attitudes to disability
- Promote good race relations between people of different ethnic origin
- Consider how to eliminate harassment
- Encourage the participation of people with a disability in the life of the community
- Take into account gender, including gender identity issues,
- Avoid age discrimination.

Promoting equality, embracing diversity and ensuring full inclusion for people who use our services is therefore central to our vision and values as a community association. We know that promoting equal opportunities, preventing discrimination and valuing diversity is fundamental to building strong communities.

We are committed to addressing and removing policies, processes and procedures, practices and behaviours within the Association that support discrimination or fail to promote equality.

### **Statement of Intent**

1. Jericho Community Association recognises that in our society power is not held equally, and that groups and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against on many grounds, including race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, class, religion, marital status, and where they live within Jericho.
2. Jericho Community Association also recognises that where direct or indirect discrimination occurs it is both morally and legally unacceptable, and is in direct contradiction of the Jericho Community Association's constitutional commitment to serve the whole community.
3. The purpose of the Equalities and Diversity Policy and Commitment is to set out clearly and fully the positive action the Jericho Community Association intends to take to combat direct and indirect discrimination in employment policy, the management of the organisation, and the services it provides to community organisations and in its relationships with other bodies and individuals.
4. In adopting this Policy and Commitment, the Jericho Community Association is also making an unequivocal commitment to implementing it, with the aim of ensuring that equal opportunities becomes a reality.
5. The Jericho Community Association also commits itself to encouraging groups using the community centre to adopt an equalities and diversity policy and to supporting and assisting them in the process.

### **Code of Conduct**

We aim to treat all people with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

We aim at all times to value and respect people's feelings.

We aim to be an organisation that has inclusive recruitment and retention practices.

### *Our Priorities*

1. We aim to create an association that is inclusive and promotes diversity and equality throughout its activities and organisation.
2. We aim to create attitudes and a culture within the association that encourages all members to challenge any language, attitude or action that may cause offence or discrimination, or that is derogatory, racist or sexist.
3. We will challenge any harassment, abuse or intimidation of any person. Any such incident will be taken seriously and if the individual does not accept that the challenge is valid and recognise it was wrong, and apologise, then that

person will be suspended from using the facilities of the association until such time as he or she can appear before the Management Committee in accordance with section 7 of the constitution. If the incident involves a member of staff, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined in the conditions of service.

**To support this code of conduct:**

1. We will provide training directly or indirectly for staff and committee members to enable them to be confident in challenging bad practice and recognising the benefits of promoting diversity and equality in all situations.
2. We will ensure that those responsible for recruiting staff are fully aware of good recruitment practice, seeking to positively promote diversity and equality, including appropriate advertising of vacancies, suitable standards for application forms, short-listing & interviewing, monitoring the diversity of applicants, taking up references, checking their entitlement to work and, as appropriate, checking up-to-date personal specifications for each post.
3. We will seek to increase the information about accessibility for people who use our services.

The JCA plans to build a fully accessible replacement for the current Centre, but in the intervening time the Association will undertake audits to ensure our building is accessible as possible for all staff and people who use it.

We will seek to maximise opportunities to listen to and learn from the experiences of people who use our services.

**Action Plan**

1. Display the Community Association Equal Opportunities statement in a prominent position.
2. Give two copies of the policy to every user of the Centre and ask them to sign and return one copy as an indication of their commitment to it.
3. Consider the implications of the policy and statement with management committee and staff. The majority of one meeting (by November 2008) will be given over to the issues connected with VISIBLE, which will include Equal Opportunities. We will consider at that point whether further training is necessary.
4. Find positive images of the diversity of life in Jericho, and display them, including in the Jericho Echo and at the Street Fair.
5. Agree a process for challenging discriminatory comments / behaviour.
6. Agree a process for disciplining Association members and staff following policies and procedures outlined in the draft Constitution and conditions of service.
7. Undertake an audit at regular intervals to ensure that the building remains as accessible as possible for Centre users – having no unnecessary obstructions, clear signing, and a general positive approach from Committee members and staff).

*Version 1.0*

Agreed at the JCA Management Committee

Date:

Signed

Chair