# Equal Opportunities Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

Meeting Point House is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. We believe everyone should be treated with dignity, fairness and respect regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

As a registered charity serving the communities of Telford and the surrounding area, we are committed to creating an environment where everyone is welcomed, valued and able to participate fully in our services, employment and volunteering opportunities.

We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation in any form.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for all.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Foster positive relationships between different groups.
- Ensure our services are accessible and inclusive.
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Trustees
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Agency workers
- Contractors
- Consultants
- Service users
- Room hirers
- Visitors
- Partner organisations working within Meeting Point House

Everyone associated with Meeting Point House has a responsibility to uphold this policy.

## 4. Protected Characteristics

Meeting Point House will not discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

These are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

## 5. Our Commitment

Meeting Point House is committed to:

- Providing equal access to our facilities and services.
- Recruiting, selecting and promoting staff and volunteers fairly.
- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- Ensuring our premises are as accessible as reasonably practicable.
- Encouraging diversity within our workforce, volunteers and trustees.
- Creating a welcoming environment for all members of the community.
- Challenging discrimination whenever it occurs.

## 6. Types of Discrimination

Meeting Point House will not tolerate:

### Direct discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

### Indirect discrimination

Applying policies or practices that disadvantage certain groups without objective justification.

### Harassment

Unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

### Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination.

**7. Recruitment and Employment**

Recruitment decisions will be based solely on:

- Skills
- Qualifications
- Experience
- Ability to perform the role

We will:

- Advertise vacancies fairly.
- Use objective recruitment processes.
- Provide equal access to training.
- Offer equal opportunities for career development.
- Pay fairly and consistently.
- Make reasonable adjustments where required.

**8. Volunteers**

Volunteers are essential to Meeting Point House.

Volunteer recruitment, training and support will be carried out fairly and without discrimination.

All volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect.

**9. Service Delivery**

Meeting Point House provides facilities and services to a wide range of community organisations and individuals.

We will:

- Welcome everyone regardless of background.
- Promote inclusive participation.
- Consider accessibility when planning activities.
- Respond positively to requests for reasonable adjustments.
- Seek feedback from users to improve accessibility and inclusion.

**10. Reasonable Adjustments**

Meeting Point House recognises its duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, volunteers and service users where appropriate.

Examples include:

- Accessible meeting spaces.
- Alternative formats for information where practicable.

- Flexible working arrangements where appropriate.
- Assistance with communication needs.
- Adaptations to policies or procedures where reasonable.

## 11. Responsibilities

### Trustees

Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with equality legislation.
- Reviewing this policy regularly.
- Promoting an inclusive culture.

### Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Implementing the policy.
- Addressing concerns promptly.
- Ensuring fair treatment.
- Supporting staff and volunteers.

### Employees and Volunteers

Everyone is expected to:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so.
- Report discrimination or harassment.
- Promote equality in their work.

## 12. Complaints

Any allegation of discrimination, bullying or harassment will be taken seriously.

Complaints may be raised through:

- Line managers
- Senior management
- The Chief Executive or Centre Manager
- Trustees (where appropriate)
- The organisation's grievance or complaints procedures

Complaints will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially where possible.

Appropriate action will be taken where misconduct is identified.

## 13. Monitoring

Meeting Point House will monitor this policy by:

- Reviewing complaints and incidents.
- Seeking feedback from staff, volunteers and service users.
- Reviewing recruitment practices.
- Monitoring accessibility improvements.
- Reviewing policies on a regular basis.

Monitoring information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

## 14. Training

Meeting Point House will:

- Provide equality and diversity awareness as part of induction.
- Encourage ongoing learning.
- Ensure managers understand their responsibilities under equality legislation.

## 15. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Informal action
- Formal disciplinary action
- Removal of volunteer status
- Termination of contracts
- Refusal of access to Meeting Point House facilities where appropriate

## 16. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Recruitment Policy

## 17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Best practice changes
- Organisational changes require revision
- Significant incidents indicate a review is necessary

**Meeting Point House** is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and respectful environment where everyone has the opportunity to participate, contribute and thrive. Equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our charitable mission and to the way we work with our staff, volunteers, partners and the wider community.