

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Overview

Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Steering Group recognises that in our society groups and individuals have been, and continue to be, discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, marital status, disability, sexuality, age and religious belief. We believe that discrimination on any ground whatsoever is unacceptable. The aim of Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Steering Group is, therefore, to provide genuine equality of opportunity for our employees, volunteers and for the guests who use our service.

### GUESTS

Guest access to Dartford Churches Winter Shelter is open to all. This means that we do not discriminate against any guest on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural origins, religion, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or age.

### Treatment of Guests

Dartford Churches Winter Shelter will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision and delivery. All guests will be treated with dignity. Moreover, we do not accept our guests encountering any such discrimination while in our care, whether from our staff, from other guests, from visitors, or from the staff of any of the external services we use. We therefore commit ourselves to investigating any allegations made. Wherever possible, we will work for reconciliation between the people involved, but our first concern will be for the welfare of our guests. We will not tolerate the humiliation of discrimination or the injustice of false allegations.

We will endeavour to ensure that our service responds appropriately to the needs of all our guests. We recognise that this will involve careful monitoring of the use made of our service and may result in the development of positive action programmes to target the needs of specific groups within those that access Dartford Churches Winter Shelter.

### VOLUNTEERS

### Treatment of Volunteers

All volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect by the Venue Managers and Dartford Churches Winter Shelter employees. However, Dartford Churches Winter Shelter recognizes that not all guests will treat volunteers and employees in a similar fashion. In a situation where a Dartford Churches Winter Shelter guest behaves badly or inappropriately, volunteers are asked to be very patient, compassionate and continually forgiving. However, any incident will be recorded, and Dartford Churches Winter Shelter will deal with verbal or physical abuse with appropriate measures.

## **EMPLOYEES**

### **Treatment of Employees**

All Dartford Churches Winter Shelter employees will be treated with dignity and respect by the church coordinators and volunteers. However, Dartford Churches Winter Shelter recognizes that not all guests will treat volunteers and employees in a similar fashion. In a situation where a Dartford Churches Winter Shelter guest behaves badly or inappropriately, employees are asked to be very patient, compassionate and continually forgiving. However, any incident will be recorded, and Dartford Churches Winter Shelter will deal with verbal or physical abuse with appropriate measures.

### **Recruitment of Employees**

Dartford Churches Winter Shelter will seek to ensure that in recruitment and employment practice there is no discrimination. However, as a Christian based organisation, the Winter Shelter will require employees to share a vision of the organisation as the visible expression of care with a Christian ethic of respect and love for all regardless of creed, race, age or gender.

### **Support offered in implementing the Equal Opportunities Act**

Dartford Churches Winter Shelter recognises the importance of training in assisting employees and volunteers to understand and operate effective equal opportunities practice. Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Steering Group will enable employees and volunteers to meet the needs of all those who might wish to access our service and to develop their own skills and abilities to full advantage. Dartford Churches Winter Shelter will also increase awareness to recognise and to deal with oppression, racism or discrimination when observed or experienced.

### **Support in dealing with discrimination**

Dartford Churches Winter Shelter will ensure that guests, employees and volunteers have adequate support to deal with discrimination in their work. This includes

- a. A mechanism for guests to register complaints where necessary. Complaints will be dealt with promptly by the Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Project Administrator.
- b. A mechanism for employees to register complaints where necessary. Complaints will be dealt with promptly by the Chair of Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Steering Group.
- c. A mechanism for volunteers to register complaints where necessary. Complaints will be dealt with promptly, initially by the Venue Manager. If this is not appropriate the complaint will be handled by the Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Project Administrator.



## **Monitoring Service Delivery**

Dartford Churches Winter Shelter undertakes to develop systems which audit and monitor service delivery.

## **Review of the Equal Opportunities Policy**

A review of the Equal Opportunities Policy and its implementation will be carried out once a year. We will consult with our guests, employees and volunteers on the development of our service on a regular basis.