



Children • Families • Community

# 5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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<b>Authorised By:</b>	Gail Stephenson & Trustees	
<b>Date:</b>	2/5/23	

# Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

**Cheviot Youth is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services, and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believes that this prevents potential and ability from being realised in young people and others.**

Cheviot Youth will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Colour
- Gender
- Sexual orientation or identity
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Age
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status
- Ill health

## Section 1 - Introduction

- As a provider of a service to the community, Cheviot Youth accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.
- Cheviot Youth recognises that some service users may – due to past or present attitudes – say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Cheviot Youth’s Equal Opportunities Policy. Cheviot Youth will do all it can to challenge such behavior. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behavior while maintaining support for the person being discriminated against.
- Cheviot Youth reserves the right to open its membership to any organisation who supports our aims and objectives. However, it will exclude from membership those organisations that actively work against the development of an equal opportunities policy, despite encouragement from Cheviot Youth.

Cheviot Youth realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- Cheviot Youth will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of human resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the

agreed procedures; please see Cheviot Youth grievance procedures. This will be achieved by following Cheviot Youth's Equal Opportunities Policy.

- Cheviot Youth will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practice through which it carries out its work. This involves striving towards as greater a diversity as possible in the management, networks and membership, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.
- Cheviot Youth will ensure that activities, sessions and services are accessible to young people wherever possible. For in-person work, this may involve changes to our sessions or buildings to accommodate for disabilities or other access needs. Online youth work may require provisions such as allowing young people to borrow a Cheviot Youth tablet, or use Wi-Fi for free in one of our buildings, in order to access digital sessions.

## **Section 2 - Responsibility**

The Board of Trustees have an overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all staff and volunteers have a duty as part of their involvement with Cheviot Youth to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

Those who recruit volunteers for Cheviot Youth projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Cheviot Youth's Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as Cheviot Youth volunteers.

Cheviot Youth will bring to the attention of all staff, volunteers, children and young people the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective.

If any young person, staff member or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter further.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behavior will be treated seriously. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

## **Section 3 - Access to sessions and activities**

Cheviot Youth will endeavor to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

Some disabilities may impact on a member of staff, a volunteer or a young person's hearing, sight or ability to understand. Cheviot Youth will ensure that sessions are accessible to these people through modified practice wherever possible. It may be that Cheviot Youth staff and volunteers require additional training and instruction related to working with disabled service users.

Young people may struggle to access sessions and activities for reasons not related to a disability or illness. For example, a young person may be unable to afford the session entry

fee, or might not have access to a phone/tablet or Wi-Fi to participate in online youth work. Cheviot Youth will make provisions for these young people where possible, in a way which is sensitive and respectful and does not draw attention to the young person.

## **Section 4 - Use of Language**

Staff and volunteers should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone.

Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

Staff and volunteers should be aware of their use of gendered language when addressing groups and individuals. Staff will use – and ensure that other staff, volunteers and young people are using – the names and pronouns which people have asked to be used.

All materials used or developed by Cheviot Youth will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

## **Section 5 - Sexual Harassment**

Cheviot Youth will not tolerate the sexual harassment of any staff, volunteers and service users.

This is interpreted as unwanted behavior of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse, or sexual abuse through comments, videos or messages online
- physical contact
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive, both in person and in online settings

## **Section 6 - What to do if you have been discriminated against**

If you feel that you have been harassed or discriminated against in any way you should in the first instance report the matter to a member of staff. If necessary, the report will be passed onto the General Manager, with the Board of Trustees being the last line of redress should that be needed.

If the complaint is against the General Manager, then the Board of Trustees should be contacted directly.

## **Section 4 - Review of the Equal Opportunities Policy**

This policy and procedure document will be reviewed every 2 years by the General Manager and the Designated Project Worker, and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

