

## **Greenpath Ventures**

### **Policies & Procedures**

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#### **Title: Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy**

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## **1. Purpose**

Greenpath Ventures is committed to providing services that do not discriminate against its clients and customers in the means by which they can access these services. This Policy sets out Greenpath Ventures commitment to tackle discrimination and promote equality and diversity in all areas of the organisation's work. This commitment extends to our employees, volunteers, suppliers, sub-contractors and service users, as well as our clients and customers. It sets out the way in which all of these parties can expect to be treated by Greenpath Ventures and its representatives.

The Policy identifies the types of discrimination that Greenpath Ventures is committed to combat, the type of work environment we aim to create (including what is and is not acceptable behaviour at work), how implementation of the Policy will be monitored (including how we will deal with any breaches of the policy by our employees and volunteers) and how concerns and complaints will be dealt with, whether these come from our employees, volunteers, customers, clients, service users, suppliers or sub-contractors. The Policy is fully endorsed by Greenpath Ventures Board of Trustees. The Finance & Administration Manager has lead responsibility for day-to-day implementation of the Policy.

## **2. Scope**

This Policy applies to all Greenpath Ventures dealings with its volunteers, customers, clients, service users, sub-contractors and suppliers. It also deals with every aspect of employment, from recruitment through to pay, access to facilities, training, promotion, and disciplinary and grievance procedures, right up to the end of the contractual relationship and beyond (for example, when we provide references). Complimentary to this Policy are other specific Greenpath Ventures policies and procedures, namely:

- **Bullying & Harassment Policy**
- **Disciplinary Policy & Procedure**
- **Grievance Policy & Procedure**
- **Complaints Policy & Procedure**
- **Disability Policy**
- **Recruitment Policy & Procedure**

- **Redundancy Policy & Procedure**
- **Retirement Policy & Procedure**
- **Volunteer Policy & Procedures**

### **3. Policy Statement**

Greenpath Ventures is committed to the fair treatment of our customers, service users, employees and volunteers (including all potential customers, service users, employees and volunteers) regardless of race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, disability or offending background. We aim to create an environment in which:

- all customers and service users are able to access our services;
- all employees and volunteers are able to give of their best; • there is no bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- all decisions are based on merit.

### **4. Legal Framework**

The legal framework in this area is provided by the Equality Act 2010 which replaces all pre-existing anti-discrimination laws. It simplifies the law by removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Equality Act 2010 protects the same groups of people that were covered by previous equality legislation, by reference to what are now called “protected characteristics”. These protected characteristics comprise:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably than another because of any one (or more) of these protected characteristics.

Greenpath Ventures requires all its employees, volunteers, sub-contractors and agents to observe the provisions laid down by the Equality Act and any subsequent re-enactment or modification thereof. Greenpath Ventures will provide employees and volunteers with all the training/education necessary to comply with the Act; and every employee and volunteer is required to ensure that they fully understand the terms of the legislation. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act, including any of the specific responsibilities below may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee/volunteer. Furthermore, employees may be held

independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by an Employment Tribunal and ordered to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.

Further details are available from The Equal Opportunities Commission, Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3EQ (telephone: 0845 601 5901).

## 5. Specific Responsibilities

Unlawful discrimination can take a number of different forms. Greenpath Ventures places the following responsibilities on all its employees, volunteers, agents and subcontractors:

- You must not treat a person worse than someone else just because of a protected characteristic (this is called direct discrimination).
- You must not do something to someone in a way that has a worse impact on them and other people who share a particular protected characteristic than on people who do not have that characteristic. Unless you can show that what you have done, or intend to do, is objectively justified, this will be indirect discrimination. 'Doing something' can include making a decision, or applying a rule or way of doing things.
- You must not treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected to their disability unless you can show that what you are doing is objectively justified. This only applies if you know or could reasonably have been expected to know that the person is a disabled person. This is called discrimination arising from disability.
- You must not treat a person worse than someone else because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.
- You must not treat a person worse because you incorrectly think they have a protected characteristic (perception).
- You must not treat a person badly or victimise them because they have complained about discrimination or helped someone else complain or have done anything to uphold their own or someone else's equality law rights.
- You must not harass a person.

In addition, Greenpath Ventures and its officers are committed to ensuring that disabled people have the same access, as far as is reasonable, to everything that is available to a non-disabled person. We will make all reasonable adjustments, including the provision of information in an alternative format to that provided to a non-disabled person. Further information is contained in Greenpath Ventures **Disability Policy**.

In relation to recruitment, if an applicant needs reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to participate in any interview or assessment process, then we will make them. And when we assess an applicant's suitability for the job we will take account of how reasonable adjustments could be made to enable them to do the job. Further information is contained in Greenpath Ventures **Recruitment Policy & Procedure**.

## **6. Monitoring**

AIM is committed to collecting data on protected characteristics in order to ensure that this Policy is being actioned and that, as far as is reasonably practicable, all protected groups are as well represented among Greenpath Ventures user groups and employees as they should be.

“Equality & Diversity” is a standing agenda item for monthly Management team meetings and quarterly Human Resources & Property Committee meetings, thereby ensuring the formalisation of monitoring, and enabling corrective actions (including disciplinary action, where appropriate) to be initiated.

## **7. Complaints Handling**

Concerns and complaints from external parties in relation to equality and diversity will be addressed in accordance with the organisation's **Complaints Policy & Procedure** which is available on Greenpath Ventures web-site.

Concerns and complaints from Greenpath Ventures employees will be dealt with in accordance with the organisation's **Grievance Policy & Procedure**.

Concerns and complaints from AIM volunteers will be dealt with in accordance with the organisation's **Volunteer Policy & Procedures**.

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