

# THE ARK CHARITY

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### 1. Introduction

The Ark Charity provides accommodation for homeless and vulnerable young people between the ages of 16 – 18 years in its “family-style” hostel in Wolverton, Milton Keynes and also through its four flats in Two Mile Ash and a development of bedsit units in New Bradwell. The flats and bedsit units are designed as move on accommodation to give ex-residents of The Ark an opportunity to move towards independence.

When residents leave The Ark or the move-on accommodation they are assisted in finding accommodation of their own and offered continuing help through floating support workers who are based at the charity.

The Ark Charity is committed to providing and maintaining equal opportunities for all residents in its hostel and move on accommodation, for all existing members of staff and for all applicants for accommodation or employment with the Charity.

The Ark Charity opposes all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age or sexual orientation. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and equally and that decisions on selection, recruitment, training, promotion, career management and terms and conditions of employment are based solely on objective criteria.

### 2. Equal Opportunities in Employment

- 2.1. All posts will be advertised both internally and externally. Suitable internal candidates will be guaranteed an interview.
- 2.2. All advertisements that are placed in publications will indicate that The Ark Charity is committed to effective implementation of an equal opportunities policy and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community. Where such advertising takes place this will be in publications that are readily available to all sectors of the community.
- 2.3. When applying for employment, all job applicants are considered having regard only to their individual aptitudes, abilities, knowledge, experience and qualifications in the relation to the job as stated in the job description and person specification.
- 2.4. Management will ensure that all persons participating in shortlisting, interviewing and selection processes are competent to do so and will arrange for suitable skills training where appropriate.
- 2.5. No method of recruitment that might unfairly exclude any potential applicant from being recruited will be used.
- 2.6. Any tests that may be applied will not have any adverse implications for any categories of applicant and will be based on objective, job related criteria.

- 2.7. All employees will be given equal consideration for training, career development and promotion. Staff are encouraged to develop themselves through training and to obtain qualifications that are appropriate to their employment. Training courses agreed by the management and by the Executive Committee will, in normal circumstances, be funded by the Charity and staff will be allowed time off to undertake such courses.
- 2.8. Staff have the right to raise a query or grievance that they have concerning the application of this policy, initially with their manager or, failing satisfaction, directly with the Executive Committee of the Charity.
- 2.9 All employees have a clear obligation to ensure that this policy is effective with regard to equal opportunities and the absence of discrimination. Employees must not harass or intimidate others on the grounds of race, disability or sexual orientation. Severe action will be taken against any employee who breaches this policy and any such instances will be treated as gross misconduct.

### 3. Equal Opportunities for Service Users

- 3.1 The Ark Charity is committed to a policy of fair and equal access to its accommodation and support services and that individuals are treated equally when they become residents or clients. All those seeking accommodation are given equal consideration having regard only to relevant criteria.
- 3.2 All applicants are interviewed and selected on a consistent basis. Where choices have to be made between applicants, then these choices are made solely on the basis of the suitability of the accommodation available, the degree of vulnerability and the Operations Manager's assessment of his/her potential compatibility with existing residents.
- 3.3. Management will ensure that all persons participating in the selection of applicants are competent to do so and will arrange for suitable skills training where appropriate.
- 3.4. It is a condition of the residents licence at the hostel that young people will be engaged in school, college, training courses or employment at the earliest opportunity after becoming resident. Residents are helped to move between these options where such moves are appropriate. Tenants at Two Mile Ash or New Bradwell are encouraged to continue with studies and/or training as a route to obtaining employment.
- 3.5. All residents are equally encouraged to take advantage of education and/or training opportunities that are appropriate to their needs and aspirations in order to assist their personal development and to qualifications that may help in gaining employment.
- 3.6. Residents have the right to raise a query or grievance that they have concerning the application of this policy, initially with a member of staff or, failing satisfaction, with The Management or the Executive Committee of the Charity.
- 3.7. The Charity recognises its duty to ensure that all residents are housed in an environment free from any kind of harassment. Residents must not harass or intimidate others on the grounds of race, disability or sexual orientation. Severe action will be taken against any resident who breaches this policy and any such instances may jeopardise the client's licence or tenancy agreement.

This policy is automatically provided to staff on appointment with revisions circulated to existing staff as these are issued. Copies of the policy are available to all those applying for positions with The Ark Charity, on request.

This policy is automatically provided to residents on arrival with revisions circulated to existing residents as these are issued. Copies of the policy are available to all those applying for accommodation with The Ark Charity, on request.

This policy is laid down by the Executive Committee of the Charity and is monitored on their behalf by the Chief Executive. This policy is reviewed annually.

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