



**Bath & West  
Community Energy**  
Generating local energy

## **BWCE Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **Introduction**

Bath and West Community Energy Limited (BWCE) is committed to promoting diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace in the belief that this is not only right, in terms of social justice and in law, but also because it brings benefits in terms of good management practice and an effective organisation. This policy will apply to BWCE's employment practices and procedures.

Employees and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).

BWCE will promote a culture where all employees are treated fairly and with respect in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Responsibility for the development, monitoring and compliance of this policy lies with the Managing Director and Board of Directors. This policy will be regularly reviewed.

The Managing Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of this policy.

The success of the policy will come from the commitment and participation of all employees of BWCE.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and BWCE may amend it at any time.

### **Diversity**

BWCE recognises that individuals are different from one another and that this difference adds value and depth (both socially and economically) to the organisation.

### **Definitions**

BWCE will promote equal opportunities in all aspects of work.

Racist, sexist or any other form of discrimination towards colleagues or clients is unacceptable. Such discrimination is prohibited under this policy and is unlawful.

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect:

**Direct discrimination** - this is treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

**Indirect discrimination** – this is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

**Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

**Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

**Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

### Statement of Policy

BWCE recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are discriminated against on grounds including race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, religion, age, or sexual orientation. BWCE recognises that discrimination may be embedded in our patterns of education, housing, employment, social interaction and political participation.

It is policy that no employee or prospective employee will receive less favourable treatment than any other nor will be disadvantaged by any circumstances, conditions or requirements which cannot be justified fairly and objectively.

Individual staff members are responsible for demonstrating the standards of a workplace that is free from discrimination. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously regardless of the seniority of those involved.

Any breaches of this policy will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action. If any staff member is found to have knowingly discriminated against an individual, they may also be liable under law for their actions.

### What staff can expect of BWCE

**Recruitment and promotion** – BWCE recognises that equal opportunities underpin every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

All vacancies will be advertised internally and externally as appropriate.

Application forms and other supporting material will be free of questions or requests for information from which inferences could be drawn as to the status of an individual that are irrelevant to the job description. Information on age, marital status, ethnicity etc. will only be collected for monitoring purposes.

All job descriptions and person specifications will be clear and objective, identifying only skills, qualifications, experience, abilities and any other factors that are needed to perform the job.

No applicant will be disadvantaged by an interview's location, facilities or unreasonable timing. Selection will be based on ability to fulfil the role using information provided on the application form, at interview and any test/assessment results.

BWCE is required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation.

**Whilst in employment** - All employees will be valued as individuals and will be treated with dignity and respect. BWCE is committed to ensuring that terms and conditions of employment are not discriminatory.

Wherever possible staff facilities and services will be available to all employees and when appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure this. For example, if an existing member of staff's circumstances change and as a result they need special equipment to continue to do their job, the organisation will make any reasonable adjustments to enable them to do so.

BWCE will do its best to use plain English in all staff communications.

**Training and development** - All employees will be provided with the opportunity for appropriate training regardless of their circumstances or status.

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to ensure that all staff are aware of the training and development opportunities that are available to them. Staff will be actively encouraged to use them.

Where an event is specifically directed towards an individual, such as training, BWCE will always try to ensure that it can be arranged and delivered in a manner compatible to an individual's circumstances and needs.

**Redundancy** - Decisions on Redundancy will be made fairly on an objective basis.

**Grievances** – BWCE views any form of discrimination or unfair treatment as unacceptable and this may lead to disciplinary action. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If any staff member feel that they have been subjected to any form of discrimination or unfair treatment, they are encouraged to inform the Managing Director, or if they are involved, the Chair or other board member and appropriate action will be taken. See separate Grievance Policy for more detail.

Approved by BWCE Chair

Signed



Dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018