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Working Together Guidelines



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

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INTRODUCTION

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is committed to equality both in employment and service delivery, and its policies and procedures have been drawn up to reflect this commitment.

It is important that all course participants can contribute fully and no one should be put off from participating because of the actions, attitudes or language of other course participants. In particular, women, black, lesbian, gay men and disabled participants have the right not to be made to feel ill at ease or distressed on a course as a result of other course participants' behaviour.

The following guidelines have been drawn up to help course participants meet the commitment of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to the full participation of all its employees and elected members in a practical and constructive way. You will see that underlying this guide is a commitment to the principle that everyone has equal rights to benefit from, contribute to and enjoy the course. This means, among other things, that we should avoid language and behaviour that is unacceptable to other participants, because it is sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist or offensive to disabled people.

We assume that course participants will agree these principles and hope the guidelines will assist in putting them into practice.

WORKING TOGETHER

A key feature of a Rhondda Cynon Taf Council course or other learning event is the value it places upon the knowledge, experience and skills that each participant brings with them to the course – both in terms of their role within the authority and their everyday lives. It is important that everyone feels equal and able to make a contribution if they so wish. So:

- Listen to what others have to say, and avoid being dismissive of their contribution.
- Wait until a speaker has finished and do not interrupt their train of thought.
- Aim to have reasoned discussion, not arguments.
- Any criticism should be constructive and help participants to develop confidence, skills and knowledge.
- Make your own contribution as clear and concise as possible and do not dominate the discussion.
- Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given encouragement and the opportunity to do so.
- It is equally important that participants on the course can speak openly about problems they or colleagues may have experienced in the full knowledge that personal or sensitive information is restricted to the classroom.

Confidentiality must be respected.

LANGUAGE

Language is important and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council policy is not to use language that offends or hurts people. This type of language should always be avoided as it causes distress. Often it is a reflection of stereotyped thinking about people within the organisation and the public we serve. Do not be surprised if you are challenged if you make broad sweeping generalisations about any group, e.g. that women only go out to work for pin money.

Language that offends or is abusive or threatening in any way should not be used and nor should jokes or comments which perpetuate discrimination.

JARGON

Jargon is a barrier to good communication. Take care to explain any jargon or initials you use which other participants may not be familiar with so that everyone understands what you are talking about.

HARASSMENT

The Council's Dignity at Work Policy should be complied with at all times and there must be no harassment of any kind.

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct which has the purpose of violating a persons dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

OUTSIDE COURSE HOURS – TEA/COFFEE/LUNCH BREAKS

What has been outlined, as guidance for behaviour during course hours is equally applicable to the scheduled breaks during the course.

TIME KEEPING

The course has a tight timetable and participants are responsible for their own time keeping. When participating in the course, you will often have a limited amount of time. Make sure you use it well and return to the main group in time for the report back.

MOBILE TELEPHONES

Using mobile telephones during the course or leaving them switched 'on' for incoming calls during the course is not acceptable. **Please switch them off.**

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted during course sessions. Smoking is an access issue for some participants and smokers must remember this. The Council's Smoking at Work policy applies during the course.

CONCLUSION

These guidelines are intended for you to use during the course to counter problems as they arise, and to ensure that no one feels excluded from the course as a result of language, actions or attitudes of other course participants. They also seek to promote Rhondda Cynon Taf Council policies on discrimination and equal opportunities in a positive way.

Please remember these guidelines when you return to your place of work and put them into practice when dealing with colleagues and public alike. Our commitment to equality as an employer and service provider can only be achieved if you understand, believe in and use these guidelines as a base in everything you do on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.