

The Essex Asian Women's Association



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION

Essex Asian Women's Association (EAWA/The Charity)

Aims and Objectives

Aims

1. To empower Asian Women with the knowledge and confidence to access a diverse range of health care initiatives.
2. To enable Asian women who are isolated to receive advice and support, helping to integrate them into the local community.
3. To address inequalities of provision of services to Asian women.
4. To celebrate and highlight the multitude of heritage that is entrenched in different cultures in the local community.

Objectives

1. To work with the local health care providers to help develop health and social care facilities appropriate for Asian women
2. To work with the appropriate agencies in assisting and guiding those women experiencing domestic violence.
3. To provide support and help when a family is experiencing crisis.
4. To provide charitable advice and assistance to relieve the needs of others.
5. To organise social gatherings where people can get together, talk, make friends in informal surroundings and celebrate their diverse culture and heritage.

POLICY 1

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Aim

The Charity recognises that an organisation providing services to people or activities in the community may attract comments of varying kinds in relation to those services that are delivered. This document sets out how the charity applies principles of fairness and justice in dealing with such issues, taking all reasonable steps to acknowledge communications and resolve any matter to the satisfaction of the complainant.

2. Comments and Compliments

2.1 Where communicated verbally to a Trustee, member or representative, by telephone or face-to-face, he or she should acknowledge the comment or compliment at the time.

2.2 Where it is considered appropriate to respond or where the comment or compliment is communicated in written or electronic form either to a Trustee, member or representative individually or to the charity as a whole, a written acknowledgement or reply should be sent either by the Trustee, member or representative (copied to the Chair) or by the Chair as deemed appropriate in each case.

2.3 A record of all such communications and responses should be made and retained.

3. Complaints

3.1 Definition

A complaint is a communication in which dissatisfaction is expressed regarding an act or omission of the Charity, its members or representatives. Training will be provided in the recognition of any element of complaint in communications from service users, partners or other members of the general public.

3.2 Verbal Complaints

Every effort should be made by Trustees, members or representatives to immediately resolve any verbal complaint which they receive, whether made by telephone or face-to-face. If resolution proves impossible, they should advise the complainant to put the issue in writing, addressed to the Chair.

3.3 Written Complaints

A written or electronic complaint should be addressed to the Chair or otherwise referred to him or her as soon as practicable.

3.4 Acknowledgement and Resolution

The Chair will acknowledge the complaint within five working days and undertake to resolve the matter within fifteen working days after an investigation into the substance of the complaint has taken place. His or her decision will be communicated to the complainant in a letter within 7 days and a record shall be retained.

3.5 The Investigation

3.5.1 Where an investigation is appropriate, the Chair will interview:

- a) the Trustee, member or representative to whom the complaint was made and
- b) any further Trustee, member or representative implicated in the complaint, who has the right to be accompanied by a friend or non-implicated member.

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3.5.2 To facilitate the investigation, access to relevant documentation or other information will be given, within the confines of the Data Protection legislation and respecting the need to preserve confidentiality at all times. Information should be shared or divulged only on a 'need to know' basis and permission should be sought whenever possible.

3.6 Appeal

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she will be advised of a right of appeal within 28 days to an Appeal Panel composed of three non-implicated Trustees, whose decision in the matter is final.

4. The Charity's Constitution

Nothing in this Policy shall conflict with any provision contained in the Charity's Constitution and shall be read in conjunction with it. Where there is any doubt as to interpretation, the provisions of the Constitution shall take precedence

5. Monitoring and Review

This policy and the associated procedures will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis.

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next Review Date:	January 2011

POLICY 2**CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY****1. Aim:**

To ensure that any conflict of interest is declared and recorded in order that the business of the charity can proceed fairly, justly and without inappropriate favour or prejudice and that the best interests of the organisation can thereby be promoted and protected

2. Definition

2.1 A conflict of interest may arise when any Trustee or member purports to participate in any discussion or make any decision at a meeting of the Charity where the subject matter is one with which he or she or any of his or her family members has an external connection and where it may be considered that he or she would not be able to discuss such subject matter or reach such decision impartially and without favour.

2.2 Examples of a Conflict of Interest (The following examples are not exclusive):

(a) Where the Trustee or member or family member in question has a proprietary or financial interest in any external organisation with whom the Charity proposes to enter into any arrangement or contract

(b) Where the Trustee or member or family member holds a fiduciary position or position of responsibility with any other charity or organisation and therefore may be placed in a situation where a conflict of loyalty between that organisation and the Charity may occur

3. Procedure

3.1 The Charity shall ensure that an Item relating to Declaration of Interests is placed on the Agenda of every formally constituted meeting of the Charity, including meetings of Trustees, where, during which discussions or decisions, a potential conflict of interest may arise

3.2 Each Trustee shall be required to declare at that point whether he or she has an interest in any item or subject matter to be discussed.

3.3 The Chair shall take a view as to whether a potential conflict of interest may arise and if so, shall ask that the Trustee take no part in either the discussion or any decision relating to the matter in question and if considered appropriate, that the Trustee or member removes himself or herself from the meeting for the duration of that item.

3.4 The Trustee or member in 3.3 above shall have a right of reply to the meeting on any decision made excluding him or her, but the Chair's decision on seclusion shall be final.

3.5 Where the item relates to any potential conflict of interest pertaining to the Chair, then the same procedure applies and he or she should similarly absent himself or herself from that item, save that any decision on seclusion or decision after the right of reply shall vest in the Vice Chair, or if absent from the meeting, the Charity Secretary

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next Review Date:	January 2011

POLICY 3

DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Aim

To enable the Charity to be managed according to the provisions of the Constitution and to ensure that all its business is conducted with regard both to due governance and in its best interests and to ensure appropriate protection for the Charity, Trustees and members

2. Definition

A disciplinary issue is one where the actions or inactions of any Trustee or member are called into question for reasons of legality, inappropriate conduct or behaviour, attitude or opinion and the Trustees take the view that the matter should be investigated and a decision made as to any sanctions that may be applied to the Trustee or member in question

3. Procedure

3.1 The Trustees' meeting shall consider and act upon any request made by a member of the Charity following any adverse report as to the conduct of any Trustee or member

3.2 Where they consider that the matter constitutes a disciplinary issue and further action is required, the Trustees shall adopt the procedure laid down in the Constitution with regard to the disciplinary action to be taken against any Trustee or member

3.3 In so doing, they shall have regard to principles of fairness and natural justice, ensuring that during their investigation, all relevant material is brought to their attention and full consideration given to any evidence brought before them

3.4 The Trustee or member under investigation shall be given full information regarding the issue and sufficient time to prepare and deliver a response to any allegations made against him or her, with the right to appear, aided or unaided, before a specially convened panel of three Trustees

3.5 In the event that the Trustees find that the Trustee or member should be disciplined, sanctions available to them, as considered appropriate, include the right to suspend the Trustee or member from meetings for an agreed period of time, the right to remove the Trustee from office and to terminate his or her membership of the Charity and in the case of an ordinary member, to terminate his or her membership

3.6 The Trustees shall undertake to record the details of any investigation undertaken and to review the process, including the suspension or termination of membership, at their next formally constituted meeting.

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next review Date:	January 2011

POLICY 4

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Statement on Equal Opportunities

The Charity affirms the value and worth of every individual person and rejects all discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or any other equal opportunities issue. Our aim is to create and foster an environment of mutual respect and consideration in which individual potential can be recognised and facilitated and in which freedom of choice and personal responsibility can be exercised. These values are promoted and expected among all staff and volunteers and among the adults, young people, families and groups who access our activities or use our services. Membership of the Charity is open to all women in the community of Southend-on-Sea who espouse these aims and can commit to promoting them in harmony together

2. Policy Aims and Statement of Intent

2.1. Aim

In affirming the value and worth of every individual, the Charity aims to challenge discrimination and affirm equalities in all areas of our organisation, including among employees, volunteers and those who access, or seek to access, the activities we hold and the services we provide

2.2. Statement of Intent

The Charity is strongly committed to appropriate action to counter any discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or any other equal opportunities issue in all aspects of what we do - and in the way we work with and relate to other organisations. We will ensure that no-one is disadvantaged in any of these matters by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in law

3. Communication

Communication is an essential element of good staff relations and where the Charity employs any staff, we will ensure that all staff appointments and departures are communicated as soon as practicable. Exceptions to this will only be applied where there are clear and cogent personal or strategic reasons to do so. In all cases, staff directly affected by such movements will be personally advised before information is generally released

4. Equal Opportunities Implementation

4.1. The Charity will ensure regular monitoring of the composition of the organisation and compare this with the make up of the community, actively addressing any disparities

4.2. We will seek to ensure that all facilities and services we provide are open to access by all sections of the community we serve, within the definition of the groups for whom we provide a service or activity. We will ensure that details of our services and provision are widely advertised and available

4.3. Appropriate publicity material for the organisation, including recruitment advertising, will demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities and will promote the values already stated above

4.4. Language or behaviour designed to be offensive to any individual or group, or which is in any way contrary to the organisation`s values, will not be tolerated.

4.5. Where appropriate, this Equal Opportunities Policy and the accompanying Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be issued to all job applicants and potential volunteers and made freely available to all who wish to access it. All applications for posts within the organisation will be appropriately monitored in respect of Equal Opportunities. We will ensure there is no discrimination on any equalities issue where such distinction cannot be shown to be a requirement of the job or office concerned

4.7. Any staff training (where appropriate) and volunteer training and development will be undertaken with equal opportunities in mind and training and information on equal opportunities issues will be provided

4.8. We are aware that a number of buildings used at present may limit access to certain disadvantaged groups. We will seek to ensure, wherever possible, that premises used by the organisation are physically accessible to all members of the community. We will also do our best to ensure that the physical and emotional environment is conducive to access by our groups (as well as to any staff and volunteers). This is particularly important in respect of buildings used for activities or service provision but is equally our intent in terms of office relocation and selection. Public meetings, social activities or events etc. as may be organised will be held at times and in venues so as to be accessible as possible.

4.9. Any complaint or grievance in connection with Equal Opportunities should be made to the Chair, either according to the provisions of the Charity's Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy and procedure or the Grievance Policy, whichever is considered appropriate.

5. Monitoring and Review

Our equal opportunities strategies will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis in respect of all procedures, organisational framework, activities, service provision and access

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next Review Date:	January 2011

Essex Asian Women's Association

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

The Charity is committed to Equal Opportunities and affirms the value and worth of every individual person and rejects all discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or any other equal opportunities issue.

In order to assist us in monitoring the effectiveness of our policy and procedures in this area, we would be grateful for your assistance in filling out the form below. These details are confidential and do not form part of your application for employment.

Name _____ (optional)

Gender Female/ Male (Delete as appropriate)

Are you (Circle as appropriate):

a single carer employed full-time employed part-time

unemployed volunteer physically disabled

learning disabled* recovering from mental illness*

other (please specify)

Ethnic Origin

Are you (please tick)

White

Asian

Afro-Caribbean

Chinese

Other (please specify)

Country of Birth _____

Religious
Affiliation _____

(Important for our service provision areas)

POLICY 5

FINANCE AND RESERVES POLICY

1. Aim

To ensure that the financial affairs of the Charity are executed with due diligence and governance and that consequently any risk to the Charity is eliminated or minimised

2. Financial Procedures

2.1. General

The financial affairs of the Charity shall be the responsibility of a properly appointed Treasurer who retains the confidence of the Trustees in his or her ability to safeguard the financial issues of the Charity, to utilise proper methods in dealing with the Charity's financial affairs, including maintaining proper accounts, reporting to the Trustee Board regularly

2.2 The Constitution

Where the Constitution relates to any issues of a financial nature, then its provisions shall apply and be implemented and nothing in this policy is intended to contradict such provisions

3. Bank Account

The Charity shall open and maintain one or more banking accounts with a recognised High Street Bank, ensuring that appropriate cheque signatories are appointed

4. Accounts Reporting

The Charity shall ensure that a formal annual audit/ independent examination of the Charity's financial affairs shall be undertaken by a properly qualified person and that this is reported fully to members at each annual general meeting of the Charity and that the Trustees shall receive details of the Charity's Management Accounts at each formal Trustees' meeting

5. Stated Reserves Policy

5.1 Definition

A Reserves Policy is designed to ensure that the funds of the Charity do not fall below an agreed level and that all efforts will be made by Trustees to obtain funds to the Charity so that expenditure budgets can be satisfied. Therefore, unrestricted funds are needed:

- (1) to provide funds which can be designated to specific projects undertaken throughout the year in executing the aims and to enable such projects to be funded, if necessary at short notice
- (2) to satisfy the costs of administration and support throughout the year without which the Charity would cease to function

5.2 The Trustees consider it prudent that unrestricted reserves should be sufficient

- (1) to enable the administration costs to be supported for a period of one year and
- (2) to obviate the prospect of bank reserves falling to a level that would prejudice the Charity's survival

5.3 The Trustees therefore have determined that the Charity's reserves should not fall below £300 at any one time during the year and this level should be reviewed on a regular basis

6. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board	January 2010
Next Review Date	January 2011

POLICY 6

GRIEVANCE POLICY

1. Aim

To resolve any grievance to the satisfaction of both the Trustee or member raising the grievance and also the Charity

2. Definition

A Grievance is an issue that may be raised by a Trustee or member of the Charity where he or she wishes to express dissatisfaction with some aspect of his or her Trusteeship or Membership and believes that the matter should be investigated so that redress can be obtained.

3. Procedure

3.1 The Trustee or member should state his or her grievance in writing to the Chair at the earliest opportunity and where it relates to a particular incident, then within twenty eight days of the date of such incident.

3.2 The Charity undertakes to resolve the grievance within fourteen days of receiving the grievance notification.

3.3 Where the Trustee or member remains dissatisfied with the outcome, he or she has a right of appeal to a panel of three non-implicated Trustees whose decision is final.

3.4 In all cases of grievance, the resolution process shall have recourse to the provisions of the Constitution and where this is silent on the matter, it shall be resolved according to the principles of fairness and natural justice.

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next Review Date	January 2011

POLICY 7

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Aim

To maintain a healthy and safe environment for the business of the Charity to be carried out effectively and to eliminate or minimise any risk to the well being of any Trustee, member or any person accessing the Charity's activities, events, services or premises.

2. Procedure

2.1 The Charity shall compile an effective Health and Safety procedure to address any issues relating to the wellbeing of any person for whom it potentially has responsibility in public liability terms, including any activity it hosts or areas for which it has occupier's liability

2.2 The Charity shall undertake to train any volunteer or staff member in all relevant aspects of health and safety and to review this on a regular basis

2.3 In connexion with 2.1 and 2.2, the Charity undertakes to be advised by any professional agency in the field of health and safety and where practicable to implement that advice

2.4 The Charity expects its trustees, members, invitees and any other person connected to its activities or events to take responsibility for their own safety and not to act in a manner that deliberately or negligently prejudices their health or safety

2.5 The above provision also relates to any partner agency or organisation with whom the Charity works to host or organise events in whatsoever environment such activity takes place. However, the Charity expects to be indemnified by any such partner organisation regarding any detriment or damage arising from any issues for which the partner organisation does or should in law and fact have sole responsibility

2.6 Either working solely or in partnership the Charity undertakes to complete in good time a risk assessment with regard to any proposals or plans for future activity and to implement such procedures as are necessary as a result of the interpretation of such assessment

2.7 Special consideration should be given where those participating in any of the Charity's activities are children under 18 or are vulnerable adults. In this connexion, this policy will be read in conjunction with the Charity's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

2.8 Where the Charity is responsible for the provision of food or drink, whether charged for or not, it shall ensure that at least the person in charge of any provider, whether Trustee or member, has the relevant food hygiene certification. The Charity may delegate such provision to any third party but is not absolved from the responsibility of ensuring that such third party has the required certification

3. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next Review Date:	January 2011

POLICY 8

RECRUITMENT TO MEMBERSHIP POLICY

1. Aim

To increase membership of the Charity and to recruit members from as wide an ethnically diverse population as possible.

2. Procedure

2.1. The benefits of membership should be publicised at every possible opportunity and from time to time specific recruitment drives should be undertaken

2.2 The Charity shall appoint a Membership Secretary to oversee the process of membership, including keeping an appropriate membership record, providing receipts for fees paid and forwarding any fees to the treasurer for banking.

2.4 New and current members are required to complete their personal details on a form provided and to pay the annual membership fee which shall be reviewed and set by the Trustees on an annual basis

2.5 In any of the above procedures, the Charity will undertake to comply with current legislation pertaining to data protection and privacy

3. Appointment of Staff

It is not envisaged that the Charity will enter into any contract of employment with any person, but where the Trustees decide so to appoint, then the Charity first undertakes to draft and approve a Staff Recruitment Policy which will comply with and implement all current legislation and guidance relating to the recruitment of staff.

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board:	January 2010
Next Review Date:	January 2011

POLICY 9

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

1. Aim

To ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult when attending a Charity event or activity.

2. Definitions

2.1 A 'Child' for these purposes is defined as a person under the age of eighteen years

2.2 A 'Vulnerable Adult' for these purposes is defined as a person over the age of eighteen years who by virtue of a physical or mental illness, disability or condition is to be regarded as not possessing the physical and/or mental faculties to be able to take reasonable care for his or her own safety and protection. Examples (which are not exhaustive) include persons with mental health problems, learning difficulties or with physical impairment relating to the senses or the capacity for movement. The conditions so described include those which are of a permanent, recurring or temporary nature

3. The Charity's Responsibility

3.1 As the Charity does not provide services or environments where the child or vulnerable adult will be present unsupervised or unaccompanied, it will not incur any responsibility over and above that which subsists in the case of an ordinary visitor to events or activities. In the case of a child or vulnerable adult visitor, it will therefore require that a responsible adult will accompany him or her and that responsibility for his or her safety and protection rests with that supervising adult

3.2 In light of 3.1 above, the Charity therefore will not require any Trustee, member or representative to undergo any specific training with regard to children or vulnerable adults and will not require Trustees, members or representatives to undergo checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

3.3 Despite the above provisions, and where an unsupervised child or vulnerable adult presents him or herself at any event or activity hosted by the Charity, appropriate and reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that the legal carer or agency responsible is alerted in order to resume responsibility for the person in question. Where this proves impossible or impracticable the Charity will alert the police so that the person can be taken to a place of safety pending the parent or carer's arrival.

3.4 The Charity undertakes to review this policy on an annual basis or sooner if it at any time decides to accept any formal responsibility for or undertake formal supervision of children or vulnerable adults.

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and a full review will take place on an annual basis

Approved by the Trustee Board	January 2010
Next Review Date:	January 2011

POLICY 10

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

EAWA is a charity which carries out its objectives through forums, meetings and social gatherings. It does not have its own premises but aims to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the impact of its activities on the environment

EAWA will strive to carry out its operations in an environmentally sensitive manner and, where possible, will aim to:-

- use local venues and follow good practice in use of transport
- minimise the consumption of resources at venues, e.g., water, heating, electricity
- minimise printing of e-communications
- use both sides of paper to print essential documents
- recycle paper and other appropriate materials
- minimise food waste

This policy will be monitored regularly to promote continuous environmental improvement.

A full review of this policy will take place on an annual basis

Approved by Trustee Board	January 2010
Next Review Date	January 2011

POLICY 11

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

EAWA is a charity which needs to collect and use certain types of information about its members and other individuals. The collecting, recording and use of this personal information – on paper, electronically or by other means – must be dealt with properly and the safeguards to ensure this are contained in the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998.

Specifically, the eight Principles of the DPA require that personal information:-

- 1) Shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met
- 2) Shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose of those purposes
- 3) Shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed
- 4) Shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- 5) Shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes
- 6) Shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act
- 7) Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data
- 8) Shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data

EAWA recognises the need to maintain confidence between themselves, and other individuals, and is committed to the lawful and correct treatment of personal information.

To this end, EAWA fully endorses and adheres to the Principles of the DPA and will ensure that everyone managing and handling personal information is aware of the requirements and undertakes to follow good data protection practice.

This policy will be monitored regularly to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments to the DPA.

A full review of this policy will take place on an annual basis

Approved by Trustee Board	January 2010
Next Review Date	January 2011