



Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The promotion of equality, diversity and anti discriminatory practice is a key priority for our organisation.
- 1.2. In making progress on these issues it is necessary to recognise people as individuals with a diverse range of identities, experiences and needs. However it is also vital to recognise that certain groups in our society face particular disadvantage and discrimination.
- 1.3. We recognise that undertaking a proactive commitment to equality and diversity requires that this commitment is reflected in all aspects of the organisation's operation, policies and procedures.
- 1.4. Furthermore, ensuring that this commitment is real is an ongoing process that will necessarily involve monitoring and reviewing what we do and how we do it to ensure that our operation is legally compliant, reflects good practice and responds to the needs of a diverse staff team and the diverse population we serve.

2. Social and community context

- 2.1 The communities of the area in which we work are diverse in respect of gender, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, disability and class and the organisation has a responsibility to ensure that our workforce reflects this diversity.
3. We recognise that many groups face discrimination in our society. Women, people from Black communities, LGBT+ people, disabled people, asylum seekers and refugees all face particular discrimination and social exclusion. This discrimination has a damaging impact on individuals and communities. Discrimination can compound social and economic disadvantage and contribute to health and other inequalities.
4. A key challenge is not just to strive towards offering an 'inclusive' service but to undertake specific measures to engage and respond to the needs of minoritised communities. This will necessarily involve active participation of people from these communities at every level in our organisation and a preparedness to look critically at where power is held.

3. Rights perspective

- 3.1 We recognise that promoting and upholding people's rights is a vital element of their needs. Children and people's rights can often be threatened, ignored or compromised. The organisation commits itself not only to upholding human rights in our operation but actively promoting the rights of children and people advocacy, lobbying and campaigning. In this respect the *UN Convention on the*

Rights of the Child [1989] and the *Human Rights Act* [1998] are key reference points.

4. Legislation

4.1 As a minimum requirement the organisation will seek to ensure that our policy and practice meets the relevant clauses laid out in the following legislation:

- ❑ *Race Relations Act* [1976]
- ❑ *Sex discrimination Act* [1975]
- ❑ *Equal Pay Act* [1970]
- ❑ *Disability Discrimination Act* [1995]
- ❑ *Race Relations Amendment Act* [2000]
- ❑ *Human Rights Act* [1998]
- ❑ *Employment Equality [Sexual Orientation] Regulations* [2003]
- ❑ *Employment Equality [Religion or Belief] Regulations* [2003]
- ❑ *Equality Act* [2010]

5. Employment

5.1. **Recruitment.** [See also Recruitment & Selection Policy]

11. The organisation is committed to recruiting staff and volunteers in a way that promotes diversity and challenges discrimination. We aim to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, class in our recruitment and selection process. All members of the recruitment panels will be trained in equality and diversity.

12. The organisation will encourage applications from groups of the community who are traditionally discriminated against when recruiting staff and volunteers. This will involve consideration of how and where posts are advertised and the mediums in which job application information is available.

5.2 Employment Conditions.

21. All job descriptions and person specifications shall include reference to working within the Equality and Diversity Policy and it will be an expectation that all staff be committed to the policy and to any appropriate training in this area. Failure to comply with the policy and associated procedures may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

22. All contracts of employment for staff will include arrangements for childcare, compassionate leave, parental leave, carer leave, sickness and holiday entitlements. There are separate policies covering leave entitlement and job-sharing that should be read in conjunction with this policy.

23. The organisation is committed to look at flexible ways of working for parents and this could include arrangements for part time working, job share and flexible hours to fit in with child care arrangements. In addition the organisation is committed to implementing reasonable flexible working arrangements and other adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled staff.

5.3 Staff development

31. All new staff, trustees and volunteers will be made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated action plans during their induction.
32. Equality and diversity issues will be addressed and explored on a regular basis in line management supervision.
33. The organisation sees the development of an inclusive service as a priority. In this respect we recognise that considerable expertise and experience exists within the staff and volunteer team. The organisation will consider the establishment of forums that support development with relation to equality.
34. The development of staff's skills in better responding to the needs of minoritised communities is an organisational priority.

7.0 Service Delivery

1. Introduction

12. We aim to make our service as accessible as possible to all sections of the community and one that recognises equality, diversity and uniqueness. Our core aim is provide high quality, empowering services to those whose participation in society can be limited by stigma, oppression, discrimination, disadvantage and poverty.
13. The organisation seeks to undertake appropriate measures to ensure that our service does not discriminate against people and furthermore to ensure that our service is inclusive and responsive to the diverse communities we serve.

2. Publicity

21. In advertising our service we will seek to use a range of mediums to ensure that publicity material is accessible esp. to people with sensory and learning disabilities.
22. Where need is evidenced, will progress towards the production of publicity in different first languages spoken in the area in which we work.
23. We will avoid the use of oppressive or stereotypical language or imagery in all publicity materials.

3. Resources

31. Delivering work in community based venues is key to making our service accessible. In doing this we will aim to use venues that are accessible.
32. In the display of materials (produced at the organisation or by other agencies) we will not use display materials that discriminate or oppress. Further more we will actively seek to display and have available media (books, videos, posters etc) that represents the diversity of the communities we serve.

4. Targeting services

41. The organisation recognises the need to be proactive in responding to the needs of minoritised communities. Action we will seek to take in this respect will include:
 - ☐ Outreach work with minoritised groups
 - ☐ The delivery of services in appropriate community based venues
 - ☐ Targeting publicity and resources at minoritised groups

- ❑ Delivering specific interventions that meet the needs of minoritised groups
- ❑ Using research and consultations to inform how our service can better meet the needs of minoritised groups
- ❑ Working in partnership with agencies that offer specific services to minoritised communities

This list should not be considered exhaustive.

5. Direct work – combating discrimination and anti-oppressive practice

51. All adults and young people from the community should be able to use the organisation's services without fear of discrimination.
52. It is expected that all staff and volunteers will positively challenge discriminatory attitudes or behaviour where they witness it or are made aware of it. Where the discrimination has serious implications for an individual or group the matter should be brought to the attention of the Coordinator or a trustee.
53. Where a service user alleges discrimination on the part of a staff member, volunteer or other service user this should be taken seriously. The service user should be informed of their right to use the Complaints Procedure and offered support in doing this.
54. Where the discrimination is, or is alleged to be, on the part of a staff member or volunteer reference should be made to the Disciplinary Procedure.
55. Where a service user's behaviour is discriminatory or oppressive this could lead to temporary or permanent withdrawal of the service.
56. Where a service user feels they are experiencing serious discrimination that significantly compromises their well-being, reference should be made to the relevant section of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
57. In developing programmes of work with adults or young people, staff should take a positive and proactive approach to anti-oppressive practice. Good informal education work should include work that promotes understanding and awareness of different groups in society and engages with issues about diversity, rights and responsibilities.

8.0 Monitoring

- 8.1 Monitoring is a way of identifying how inclusive our organisation is both in employment and service delivery. The organisation will monitor the following main areas:
 - ❑ Who responds to job adverts
 - ❑ Who is employed
 - ❑ Service users
 - ❑ Volunteers
 - ❑ Membership of the trustee board
- 8.2 Monitoring will include ethnic origin, sexuality, gender and disability. Regular reviews will take place to ensure that the organisation is inclusive and to measure progress and the impact of any action taken.
- 8.3 Records will be kept confidential and in line with data protection law and any information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating our service both in terms of staff recruitment and service delivery. Information gathered will be normally anonymous and optional.

9. Partnerships

- 9.1 Partnership work can bring added value, resources and expertise to the organisation's work with adults. As highlighted above such partnerships and joint working can play a key role in delivering a more creative and inclusive service.
2. The organisation will not enter into partnership work with organisations that operate in ways that are discriminatory or oppressive.
3. In drawing up formal partnership agreements expectations around equality and anti-oppressive practice should routinely be part of those agreements and should be reviewed along side other aspects of the working relationship.
4. Failure, on the part of another agency, to uphold agreed standards in relation to equal opportunities and anti oppressive practice will be considered reasonable grounds for the termination of a partnership or joint working agreement.

10.0 Principles into practice

1. However comprehensive a policy, progress can only be made if that policy is implemented. With reference to equality and diversity there is a clear need for the integration of thinking and action in all parts of the organisation's policy and practice.
2. Reference to implications for equality and diversity should routinely form part of every strategic and work plan implemented at the organisation.
3. An overall strategic plan for the implementation of this policy should be drawn up with specific plans, timescales, lead responsibility and success criteria identified.
4. Progress on the implementation of the policy and should be reviewed on an annual basis with a report to the trustee board.

11. Responsibility

- 11.1 The implementation of this policy and progress towards a more diverse and inclusive service relies on the commitment and responsibility of everyone involved at the organisation. While overall strategic responsibility rests primarily with the trustee board and the lead responsibility for policy development and implementation lays with the Leadership Team everyone involved in the organisation has a role to play.

Date for Review: August 2025