

Equality and Diversity Policy

Refreshed: February 2013

Equality Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection for individuals with certain protected characteristics against prohibited conduct such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimization; and a duty to make adjustments for disabled people in certain circumstances. The relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Equality and diversity statement

To ensure that we comply with the principles and duties imposed by the Equality Act 2010, we embed equality into all our planning, and the decisions and actions we take in relation to employment, volunteering and our service provision. Equality law requires us to do this. However, we also believe we have a moral obligation to do this because we value diversity and strive to be inclusive in all aspects of our work.

Purpose of the policy

We recognise that the society in which we operate is diverse. We aim to reflect the diversity of needs of the communities we work with, in our employment, volunteering programmes, and in our services, as far as is reasonably practicable and irrespective of a person's personal characteristics.

We value individual attributes, such as skills, knowledge and background, in our employees, volunteers and service users. We respect these differences and for our employees and volunteers we will seek to nurture these differences for optimal working conditions for us and the individual.

Equality in our workforce

We value and celebrate the diversity that exists in our workforce and our committed to creating a working environment in which everyone can take full part. We aim to develop, promote and deliver our employment, volunteering and training opportunities, without discriminating on the basis of a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation, or any aspect of an individual's background or heritage which is used as justification for unfair treatment.

We believe our organisation will be a better, more creative and innovative place to work and volunteer as a result of managing our people in a way that gets the best from their diversity, values their different perspectives and individual backgrounds, and integrates fairness and equity into every aspect of our employment practices.

We will do this by:

- Recruiting, attracting, developing and retaining the most talented people, valuing the varied skills and experiences people bring to the organisation and ensuring that our workforce is representative of our community

- Developing more imaginative and open ways of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, making sure that our employment and volunteering opportunities are accessible to all and encouraging applications from all sections of our community
- Providing a safe and accessible working environment that values and respects the identity and culture of each person
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers have access to promotion, learning and development opportunities so that their contribution and potential are maximised
- Regularly reviewing our people management policies and practices to make sure that they support these commitments, including the commitment to making reasonable adjustments where appropriate to do so
- Providing support and training to ensure that this policy is communicated, understood and acted on by all of our staff and volunteers
- Making sure that all our staff and volunteers understand their rights and responsibilities concerning discrimination, bullying and harassment, including third party harassment
- Setting performance indicators so that we can monitor and regularly report on our progress
- Implementing a fair and equitable approach to how we pay and reward our people for equal work, making sure that we regularly review its application
- Making sure that we treat seriously, behaviour that is deliberately contrary to our valuing of diversity principles and take appropriate action

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer and as such our management will rigorously observe the principles and actively pursue the objectives set out in the discharge of their responsibilities so that this policy is fully implemented.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All full-time and part-time staff, volunteers and job applicants (actual or potential) will be treated fairly and selection for employment, promotion, volunteering, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Reasonable adjustments will be made to any physical feature, policy or procedure in order to help a person do their job.

Any act which contravenes the Equality and Diversity Policy and practice will be regarded as gross misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action including dismissal being taken against a staff member in breach of the procedure.

Implementation

The Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. The Chief Executive and all other line-managers have responsibilities and it is expected that all staff abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy, we will ensure that:

- The policy is communicated to all staff and volunteers through induction training and will be contained in the staff and volunteer handbook and will be made known to job applicants
- Line-managers are aware of their responsibilities through appropriate training
- Staff involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques

Monitoring and reviewing

The Board of Trustees will establish a system that will evaluate the results of implementing the policy, enabling recommendations for change to be made and areas for development to be identified. Regular surveys will be used to monitor the operation of this policy.

Equality in the work place

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by us. Staff and volunteers who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, from other staff, volunteers or from service users, are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures. These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of staff or volunteers to pursue complaints under the legislation. Every effort will be made to ensure that staff and volunteers making complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Equality in the provision of services

As a provider of services we view different perspectives positively and seek to be a model of good diversity practice. We provide the same high standard of service to all of our service users regardless of their personal characteristics and we expect any other organisation or individual that we work with to have the same high standards.

If a service user or member of the public feels that they have been discriminated against by our staff or volunteers they are entitled to complain to the Chief Executive via our Complaints Policy. Our complaints procedure does not replace or detract from the right of the service user to pursue complaints under the legislation. We will deal with all complaints made seriously, promptly and confidentially, and in line with our Complaints Policy

Relevant Legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998