



## **Equality & Diversity Policy of Why Don't We...**

herein referred to as the group

### **1.0 Principles**

- 1.1 The group is wholeheartedly committed to promoting equality and diversity and to becoming a model of best practice in the voluntary and community sector.
- 1.2 We aim to encourage, value and manage diversity in service delivery. Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality and diversity. We believe that our society will be stronger and more effective if we can meet the diverse needs of all our service users and attract and retain a Management Committee that reflects the community we serve.
- 1.3 The group recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination. Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, and a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.
- 1.4 Discrimination can be direct or indirect (where the requirement or condition on all, but which has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified). All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. We are committed to combat discrimination in all its forms and to challenge disadvantage.
- 1.5 Service users have a duty to cooperate with the group to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Service Users should draw the attention of their Supervisor/ Leader to suspected discriminatory practices or to cases of bullying or harassment.

### **2.0 Statement of Intent**

- 2.1 The group aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.
- 2.2 We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals and/ or groups from accessing our services, from realising their potential as a service provider and/ or volunteer from contributing fully to our society's performance.
- 2.3 We will comply with all legislation created to combat discrimination and to promote equality, following the codes of practice issued to support this legislation.

- 2.4 We will ensure that all our policies, procedures and guidelines reflect and reinforce our commitment to equality and diversity. We will ensure that mechanisms are in place for responding promptly to complaints of discrimination or harassment from service users, volunteers, stakeholders and the wider public.
- 2.5 Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all aspects of their involvement with the group. We will welcome underrepresented groups and individuals to participate in the opportunities we provide.
- 2.6 We will operate procurement practices and partnership arrangements that ensure others commissioned to provide services for us share our commitment to fairness and equity.
- 2.7 We will make this policy known to all volunteers, service users and partners and encourage their involvement in its implementation. We will review this policy periodically to ensure it reflects our aspirations

### **3.0 Service Delivery**

- 3.1 The group provides an important service that has been developed over the years to meet a variety of needs. We are committed to Customer Care and to providing quality services.
- 3.2 We will:
  - 3.2.1 Consult existing and potential service users on the service they expect and listen to their views.
  - 3.2.2 Ensure that users of our services are at the centre of our actions and that we will deliver the highest quality service possible within the resources at our disposal.
  - 3.2.3 Aim to deliver these services in a fair and equitable manner. We want our services to be accessible and useful to everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, national origin, sexuality, or any other factors, which may cause disadvantage.
  - 3.2.4 Not tolerate any practices that result in the provision of a lower standard of service to any group or individual because of unfair or unlawful discrimination.
  - 3.2.5 Keep our services, procedures and practices under constant review to ensure they are transparent, fair, inclusive and free from discrimination.
  - 3.2.6 Make sure our service users know that any breach of our Equality and Diversity Policy will be met with direct action.

#### **4.0 Recruitment and Selection**

- 4.1 We will ensure that people from all local communities have equality of opportunity to participate in all areas and levels of the group so that we better represent our area of interest.
- 4.2 Ensure that all members are recruited and promoted on the basis of ability and other objective, relevant criteria.
- 4.3 Be committed to equality of opportunity for all people and protect against all forms of discrimination, with particular regard to Gender; Race; Disability; Religion and Belief; Age and Sexuality.
- 4.4 Scrutinise the recruitment process to ensure that we do not discriminate or discourage interest from any section of the community.
- 4.5 Use appropriate legislation as a framework for action to support the recruitment process in a positive way.
- 4.6 Collect and use recruitment information to support a fair and effective recruitment process.

#### **5.0 Training and Social Development**

- 5.1 We will strive to create a prejudice-free and supportive working environment.
- 5.2 Ensure that all participating members are developed by the provision of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities in line with social needs.
- 5.3 Put the full range of policies in place so that all members and volunteers understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
- 5.4 Not tolerate intimidation, harassment and bullying and such actions will lead to appropriate action.



## **6.0 Implementation**

The group is responsible for policy implementation.

- 6.1 Where resources allow, a working group will take a lead on the implementation and development of this policy. Equality and Diversity will be included as a generic item on any meeting agenda relating to the groups activity.
- 6.2 The working group will take responsibility for carrying out impact assessments on key areas of activity as part of a rolling programme covering a four-year cycle. Based on the findings of these assessments, the group will [where resources allow] draw up an Action Plan detailing how it will deliver this policy and challenge discrimination in all activity areas. The plan will be kept under constant review.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the group monitor effectiveness, and to review and develop the policy where necessary. Monitoring and reviews will take place no less than annually.
- 6.4 Each group member, volunteer and partner is responsible for his or her own compliance with this policy. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to appropriate action against a member of the Management Committee, termination of contracts for services of consultants, contractors or trainers, or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.
- 6.5 Any participating member who feels that they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with a member of the group
- 6.6 Initially the participating member and his/her supervisor/ leader should aim to resolve the matter informally. It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and can be resolved once the problem becomes clear.
- 6.7 If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint is very serious; the individual should raise the matter, in writing as a formal grievance.
- 6.8 The group will ensure that all participating members, volunteers, and Management Committee members receive induction on the policy and action plan.
- 6.9 When and where resources allow, appropriate training and guidance will be provided to develop equality and diversity.
- 6.10 The policy will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available. Service users will be advised of the policy will have access to the group's Complaints Procedure.