

## **Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity Policy.**

### **1. General Statement**

- 1.1 Burton and District Mind is committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment and the services it provides. No user of Burton and District Mind's services, employee, trustee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are: age, sex, race, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and civil partnership or marriage.
- 1.2 As an employer and provider of a service to the community, Burton and District Mind accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, trustees and service users to ensure that no other service user, volunteer, trustee or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated in para 1.1 of this policy.
- 1.4 Burton and District Mind recognises that some clients and users of its service may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Burton and District Mind's Equal Opportunities Policy. Burton and District Mind will do all it can to challenge such behaviours. In cases where intervention is possible an approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client. A record will be kept of such situations.

### **2. Responsibility**

- 2.1 The Board of Directors at Burton and District Mind have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all employees, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Burton and District Mind to do everything that can to ensure that the policy works in practice.
- 2.2 Burton and District Mind will bring to the attention of all employees, job applicants, volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it. Reference to the policy should be included in contract documents with outside organisations.

- 2.3 Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in Burton and District Mind projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Burton and District Mind's Equality and Diversity Policy and adhere to it while working as Burton and District Mind volunteers.

### **3. Positive Action**

- 3.1 Burton and District Mind believes that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that positive steps, within the law, shall be taken. Burton and District Mind is committed to:
- i) Recognising and developing potential which has not been used before because of past discrimination and disadvantage.
  - ii) Encouraging access and applications from under-represented groups.
- 3.2 Every effort will be made to ensure that the services offered by Burton and District Mind reflect the composition of the community it serves.

### **4. Dealing with Complaints**

- 4.1 If any service user, volunteer or employee feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with either:
- i) their line manager
  - ii) the Senior Manager
  - iii) the manager of the project where the alleged discrimination occurred.
- 4.2 All instance or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- 4.3 Complaints or allegation of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious and may involve using the disciplinary procedure.

### **5. Recruitment**

- 5.1 In most circumstances, job vacancies will be advertised internally (as well as in the public domain) to encourage service users and volunteers to apply.
- 5.2 Burton and District Mind will ensure that job description; person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirement of the job and do not imply sex or other stereotyping.
- 5.3 All advertisements will state that Burton and District Mind is seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer. A copy of Burton and District

Mind's Equal Opportunities policy will form part of all recruitment processes.

- 5.4 Burton and District Mind will take such positive steps, within the law, to redress imbalances within its workforce.
- 5.5 Where Burton and District Mind proposes to use temporary staff it will, where possible, employ people with mental health problems or other disabilities in the hope that they may then be found long-term jobs in Burton and District Mind.
- 5.6 Application forms will make it clear that life experience as well as qualifications and work experience is valid.
- 5.7 In the interest of operating an effective Equal Opportunities Policy, Burton and District Mind will monitor certain information about job applicants. All such information will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff.

## **6. Training Opportunities**

- 6.1 Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job or personal development.
- 6.2 Training courses will be non-residential and in working hours whenever possible.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of every individual member of staff to participate in equal opportunities training that is provided.

## **7. Working Conditions**

### **7.1 Pregnancy**

Burton and District Mind recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions through reasonable adjustments and will consider sympathetically any requests for such changes.

### **7.2 Antenatal Care**

Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant employees to attend antenatal classes, including medical checks and relation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

### **7.3 Flexible Hours and Job Sharing**

Working hours and arrangements will, where possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees. Requests for job sharing or part-time working to meet

employee's needs for shorter hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

#### **7.4 Accessible Buildings**

Burton and District Mind will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all of its premises are fully accessible. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are as accessible as practically possible.

#### **8. Use of Language**

- 8.1 Staff, volunteers, trustees and service users will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles;
- i) disabled groups and/or individuals with special needs
  - ii) any race, culture or religion
  - iii) a person's sexual orientation
  - iv) women and/or men
  - v) a person's age
- 8.2 Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and is has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken is they persist with it.
- 8.3 All materials used or developed by Burton and District Mind will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

#### **9. Sexual Harassment**

- 9.1 No member of staff, trustee, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.
- 9.2 This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:
- i) verbal sexual abuse
  - ii) physical contact
  - iii) repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive
- 9.3 If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user, volunteer, trustee or employee who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

## **10. Equal Opportunities Officer/Monitoring of Policy**

- 10.1 The reason for having an Equal Opportunities Officer is to advise, inform and consult with management, staff and service users in order to progress and improve equal opportunities within Burton and District Mind.
- 10.2 The person appointed to this role should be committed to progressing equal opportunities with Burton and District Mind in a positive manner.
- 10.3 The Equal Opportunities Officer will:
- i) monitor and report on Burton and District Mind's equal opportunities progress, development and practice and make an annual report to the Board of Directors of Burton and District Mind.
  - ii) Ensure staff, trustees, service users, and volunteers awareness and understand of equal opportunities issues and practice within Burton and District Mind via training and development
  - iii) Advise and consult with Burton and District Mind's Board of Directors on equal opportunities and recommend and discuss courses of action
  - iv) Know or have access to appropriate information, legislation, policy etc. for the purposes of carrying out their role
  - v) Identify and advise on any Burton and District Mind equal opportunities training needs and provision.
- 10.4 If the Equal Opportunities Officer is:
- i) a member of staff, Burton and District Mind will allow adequate time off from his/her normal contracted duties to attend meetings and training events and perform this specific role. This time off will be negotiated with the Equal Opportunities Officer's line manager
  - ii) a trustee, Burton and District Mind will encourage and pay the necessary expenses for him/her to attend meetings and training courses relevant to this role.
- 10.5 It is not intended that the Equal Opportunities Officer should represent particular views, opinions or interests of individuals or groups not have the authority within this role to discipline either staff or service users, or raise a grievance on behalf of a particular individual or group.
- 10.6 The Equal Opportunities Officer will be available in an advisory capacity in the care of a grievance involving equal opportunities issues.
- 10.7 The current Equal Opportunities Officer is:

**Chief Officer**

Lynne Barrell  
Burton and District Mind  
67 Branston Road  
Burton on Trent  
Staffordshire  
DE14 3BY  
01283 566696

**11. Further Information**

11.1 Further information and guidance on equal opportunities can be accessed via:

ACAS: <http://www.acas.org.uk/> (8/12/16)

ACAS Publication – The Equality Act 2010 – guidance for employers:  
<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/8/a/Equality-Act-2010-guide-for-employers.pdf> (8/12/16)

This policy and procedure was adopted by the Board of Directors on: Feb 2022