

Equality and diversity procedure

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Name of Local Mind	
Policy	
Version	
Date when last reviewed	
Date when next review due	
Author	
This policy is for:	

1. General Statement

1.1. We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment and the services it provides. No user of our services, employee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment because of:- sex, colour, ethnic origin, age, race, disability or health condition, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

1.2. As an employer and provider of a service to the community, we accept 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 and service users to ensure that no other service user, volunteer or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated in Para. 1.1 of this policy.

1.4. We recognise that some clients and users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Mind's Equal Opportunities Policy. Mind will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. 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. Our Board has 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 us to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

2.2. We 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 agencies.

2.3. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in our projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Mind's Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as Mind volunteers.

3. Positive Action

3.1. We believe that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that positive steps shall be taken. We are 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 our services reflect the composition of the community it serves and will publish details of service user statistics by gender, age and ethnicity.

3.3 Where we contract out work it will make special efforts to use the service of its own work-based project,

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 in the case of staff

ii) the equal opportunities officer

iii) the manager/key worker of the project where the alleged discrimination occurred.

4.2. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

4.3. Complaints or allegations 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 to encourage service users and volunteers to apply.

5.2. We will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply sex or other stereotyping.

5.3. All advertisements will state that we are seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer. A copy of our Equal Opportunities Statement will form part of all application packs.

5.4. We will take positive steps to redress imbalances in its work force.

5.5. Where we propose 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.

5.6. Application forms will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid.

5.7. In the interests of operating an effective Equal Opportunities Policy, we 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

We recognise that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions 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 relaxation/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, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees with no qualifying length of service, to facilitate the caring for children and other dependants. Requests for job sharing or part-time working to meet employees' needs for shorter hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

7.4. Accessible Buildings

We will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all its premises are fully accessible. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

8. Use of Language

8.1. Staff, volunteers 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 it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

8.3. All materials used or developed 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, 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 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.

10.2. The person appointed to this role should be committed to progressing equal opportunities in a positive manner.

10.3. The Equal Opportunities Officer will:

- i) Monitor and report on equal opportunities progress, development and practice and make an annual report to the Board.
- ii) Ensure staff, service users' and volunteers' awareness and understanding of equal opportunities issues and practice via training and development.
- iii) Advise and consult with the Board and Finance and General Purposes Committees on equal opportunities to 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 equal opportunities training needs and provision.

10.4. i) If the Equal Opportunities officer is a member of staff we 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) If the Equal Opportunities Officer is a trustee we will encourage and pay the necessary expenses for him/her to attend meetings and training courses relevant to the role.

10.5. It is not intended that the Equal Opportunities Officer should represent particular views, opinions or interests of individuals or groups, nor 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 case of a grievance involving equal opportunities issues.

10.7. The current Equal Opportunities Officer is:

Contact Name

Local Mind Name

Address