

A decorative graphic in the top-left corner consisting of several curved, overlapping lines in shades of blue and red, mirroring the style of the 'Improving Lives' logo.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Improving Lives is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee, volunteer and student feels respected and able to give of their best.

To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equity for all in our organisation. It is our aim to ensure that no employee, job applicant, volunteer or student receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/ belief, sex and sexual orientation: the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Equity refers to a state where everyone – regardless of their ethnic background, country of origin, age, physical ability/disability, or gender – has a level playing field. Equity attempts to identify specific needs and requirements and then tries to address the differing needs to bridge the gap.

All workers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All team members will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our commitment:

1. To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
2. Every team member is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
3. Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
4. Equity in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
5. We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
6. Breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
7. This policy is fully supported by senior management and the Board.
8. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

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In our work with the people who use the service we will:

Tackle the prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage which occurs in the lives of those with whom we work.

Take action to eradicate discrimination and inequality when delivering services and ensure that everyone who uses our services will be treated in a professional manner, with courtesy, respect and dignity.

Adopt legal, national and local guidelines, relevant legislation and policies to ensure equality of opportunity and promote good relations between all the communities with whom we work.

Evaluate and monitor the impact of our policies, services and functions on the people who use our service by seeking regular feedback, and make changes to services where they impact unfairly or adversely on any group/s.

Make equalities the responsibility of *everyone*, including employees, volunteers, students and Board Members.

Share information and experience of good practice on equality through links with other public, private, voluntary and community organisations with whom we work.

Use the “Social Model of Disability” as the basis for our work to promote equality of opportunity for and to tackle discrimination. The social model of disability identifies systemic barriers, derogatory attitudes, and social exclusion (intentional or inadvertent), which make it difficult or impossible for individuals with impairments to attain their valued level of functioning. The social model of disability diverges from the dominant medical model of disability, which is a functional analysis of the body as a something to be fixed in order to conform with normative values. While physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these do not necessarily have to lead to disability unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences.

Responsibilities of Management

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Chief Executive Officer. The trustees will ensure that they and their staff operate this policy and arrangement and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The Managers will ensure that:

- All their staff are aware of the policy and arrangements and reason for the policy. Appropriate training will be arranged where necessary.
- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible
- Proper records are maintained

Responsibilities of Team Members

All team members (employees, volunteers and students) are responsible for ensuring that there is no discrimination in the service offered. They should:

- Comply with the policy and arrangements
- Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics
- Ensure that no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic
- Inform the Service Manager or CEO if they become aware of any discriminatory practice

Third Parties

Any discrimination or harassment towards a member of the team, which is related to a protected characteristic, from a third party will not be tolerated. The member of staff should inform the Service Manager or CEO and the incident will be investigated and all reasonable steps taken to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

Rights of People with Impairments (Disability)

Under the terms of this policy the managers are required to:

- Make reasonable adjustments to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example training, provision of equipment, reduced working hours. Advice will be sought from external agencies where appropriate.
- Include people with impairments in training/ development programmes
- Give full and proper consideration to people with impairments who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

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Monitoring

There will be routine collection and analysis of information on employees and service users by including gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion/beliefs, disability. This will be for monitoring purposes only and not used for any other purpose.

If monitoring shows that recruitment, selection and workforce are not representative of the population an action plan will be developed to address the issues.

This policy will be reviewed annually.