

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Herefordshire Mind believes that all people have the right to be treated fairly and with respect. As an organisation, it is committed to creating an inclusive environment, promoting equality and diversity in all services, and to giving equality of opportunity to its' existing and potential client and employee group. This does not mean treating everyone the same – it means recognising people's differences, adapting the way we work in order to ensure that everyone is given a fair and equal chance, and avoiding unlawful discrimination. The application of this policy therefore affects staff, clients, trustees and volunteers.

Herefordshire Mind is committed to ensuring fair access to services and to employment. It values diversity, promotes inclusion and provides equality of opportunities at all times. The organisation welcomes people from any cultural or ethnic background and will actively seek out under-represented groups. We undertake not to discriminate against any person on the grounds of gender, age, religion or religious belief, race, disability, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the organisation treats all individuals fairly with dignity and respect, promotes equality of opportunity, establishes clear guidance regarding equality, eliminates unlawful discrimination and complies with legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

As an organisation we will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation and will challenge such behaviour.

Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, termination of volunteer placements, or withdrawal of services.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

At Herefordshire Mind we believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective.

We aim to:

- Provide equality for all
- Promote an inclusive culture
- Respect and value everyone's differences
- Prevent discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Promote and foster good relationships
- Ensure that no applicant for our services receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic

- Ensure that individuals are offered a service entirely on the basis of their relevant needs and circumstances
- Ensure training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff
- Ensure equality in the workplace is standard management practice and runs through everything that we do
- Review all policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure fairness and awareness of equal opportunities for everyone

We will not discriminate against the staff we employ, or those seeking employment with us, or our clients, or volunteers, on the grounds of the following protected characteristics (as outlined in the Equality Act, 2010):-

- Race
- Sex
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status including civil partnerships
- Religion or religious belief
- Disability
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Herefordshire Mind has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all employees, volunteers, trustees and clients have a duty as part of their involvement with Herefordshire Mind to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be updated according to changes in legislation, or circumstances.

Herefordshire Mind will ensure all employees, job applicants, volunteers and clients are aware of this policy, and will provide any necessary training to ensure that the policy is effective. The policy will be distributed and publicised throughout the organisation and elsewhere, as appropriate.

Reference to this policy will be included in contract documents with outside agencies.

4. ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE

- Herefordshire Mind is committed to ensuring that anti-discriminatory practice is promoted throughout the organisation. It aims to develop its workforce to become fully sensitive to the diversity of the local community.
- Herefordshire Mind will work actively with staff members and clients in order to promote and encourage a positive attitude towards difference.

Individuals will be encouraged to extend their awareness of social and cultural settings beyond their immediate experience.

- Herefordshire Mind aims to empower its employees to recognise and to challenge any discriminatory or oppressive language and behaviour, and to be pro-active in presenting positive images of the diversity of people that make up our society. This includes challenging clients who are behaving inappropriately with regard to equal opportunities.
- The organisation will take all reasonable steps to ensure that work settings and care settings value differences in identities, cultures, religions, beliefs, abilities and social practices. Herefordshire Mind aims to ensure that all settings are welcoming, non-threatening and stimulating places to be, places where individuals are valued because of their differences and not in spite of them.

5. RECRUITMENT

Recruitment procedures will encourage all sections of the community to apply, with the aim of having a workforce and trustee body reflecting the composition of the local community.

All appropriate opportunities will be taken in advertising and with application packs to make it clear that Herefordshire Mind seeks to be an effective equal opportunities employer. Wherever appropriate, life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience will be taken into consideration.

All applicants will be sent an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form to complete and return with their application. These will be used for monitoring purposes (see point 7 - Evaluation and Monitoring). It will remain confidential and will be kept separately from the application form.

Herefordshire Mind will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply gender or other stereotyping.

The organisation will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees, clients, trustees and others making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate in making these decisions. All applicants for jobs will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.

6. PROMOTION, TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

All employees will be given fair and equal access to opportunities for training, development and advancement.

The organisation aims to provide guidance and training on Equality and Diversity.

7. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Herefordshire Mind is committed to a continuing programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all staff, clients, volunteers, contractors, stakeholders and anyone we work with.

The organisation will audit the age, gender, disability and ethnic origin of staff and clients. It will also monitor the number of successful and unsuccessful applications, and exits from each service. Herefordshire Mind may then target recruitment, or service delivery, at certain sections of the community in light of this information.

On an annual basis the organisation will collate and present to the Board the information it has been gathering, and produce a summary review of equal opportunities issues. The organisation can then monitor its performance against any equality access targets it has set.

8. COMPLAINTS

Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Grievance Procedure and any claims of inequality will be thoroughly investigated.

Any clients or volunteers should make a formal complaint in line with the Complaints Procedure.

9. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Recruitment and Selection
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Complaints Procedure
- Harassment Policy

Policy Agreed: September 2016

Policy Agreed By: Executive Director

Policy Review Date: September 2019