

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Statement of Intent:

Pathways for all People is committed to equal opportunities for our staff and service users. We acknowledge that discrimination and prejudice exist. We are committed to ensuring that we provide equal opportunity in all aspects of employment and use of our services. No job applicant, employee or volunteer, or person applying for or receiving our accommodation and support services will be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, marital and parental status, religious or political beliefs, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, trade union activities, spent criminal convictions, employment status or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue. This principle applies to all aspects of employment including, pay, hours of work, holiday entitlement, work allocation, sick pay, pensions, recruitment, training, and promotion and to all aspects of access to and delivery of our accommodation and support services.

2. Definition of Terms Used:

- 2.1 Direct discrimination means treating a person, on the above grounds, less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same circumstances.
- 2.2 Indirect discrimination means applying a requirement or condition which, whether Intentionally or not, has an adverse effect on one particular group.
- 2.3 Harassment is any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, which is unwanted, unwelcome. Found to be offensive, objectionable, upsetting or embarrassing to the recipient, and which might threaten an employee's job security or service user's home or create a stressful or intimidating work or living environment.
- 2.4 Victimisation is treating a person less favourably than others because she / he has exercised her/his right under this policy or the relevant legislation.

3. General Principles:

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of all the employees at whatever level of the organisation to ensure that this policy is effective. The director is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy.
- 3.2 The director will bring to the attention of all employees and volunteers, whether full or part-time, regardless of length of service, the provisions in this policy. Service users will be advised of the policy by their support worker when they take up our service.
- 3.3 Training will be made available to all staff covering equal opportunity Issues. This may be done whether as part of training on other topics – for example recruitment and selection – or through specific equal opportunity training.

4. Anti-Discriminatory Practice:

- 4.1 Pathways for all People is committed to ensuring that discrimination does not occur knowingly or unknowingly in its operations.
- 4.2 While our formal policies and procedures seek to create equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. We are also aware that our own language and approach to people and situations are important.
- 4.3 All staff and volunteers will work to create an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture where all service users, applicants and those applying to and working for Pathways for all People feel that they are being treated fairly and as valued individuals, free from negative stereotyping and discrimination.
- 4.4 All staff will be aware of any specific communication, cultural or religious needs of service users, which can be addressed through the needs assessment and support planning process and with liaison or input from any specialist or community organisation.

5. Staff Recruitment:

- 5.1 Application forms will seek to enable people to emphasize the positive aspects of their application and will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualification and previous work experience is valid.
- 5.2 Whenever applicants receive an application form, they will also receive an equal opportunities monitoring form and a job description. Job descriptions will include a person specification, which will indicate the competences, work experience, personal attributes, educational qualifications, and any other factors that are essential for the performance of the job.
- 5.3 Each applicant will be assessed against the job description and the person specification.
- 5.4 Pathways for all People will provide job descriptions on tape when asked and will do whatever else it can to facilitate applications from people with disabilities.
- 5.5 Pathways for all People is committed to taking positive action to ensure that groups who are oppressed or discriminated against are equally represented at all levels of employment within the organisation.

6. Staff Training:

- 6.1** Employees will be encouraged to undertake training relevant to their present job or personal development. Where payment by Pathways for all People is required or the training is to take place in Pathways for all People, time, and consideration will have to be given to the organisation's priorities in terms of the relevance to its organisational objectives, the resources needed and operational requirements.
- 6.2** Training courses should be non-residential and in working hours whenever possible. In those circumstances where residential are unavoidable or positively desirable, efforts will be made to ensure that staff are not prevented from attending because of the need to support dependants, poor access, or any other discriminatory cause.
- 6.3** Records of training undertaken will be kept in staff induction folder so that it will be possible to establish if any discrimination in access to training appears to be occurring, and for remedial action to be taken.

7. Staff Conditions of Service:

- 7.1** All employees as part of their terms and conditions of employment will adhere to Pathways for all People equal opportunities policy. Failure to do so shall be cause for disciplinary procedures to be instituted which could lead to dismissal. In addition, any employee who considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any grounds may implement the grievance procedure.
- 7.2** Pathways for all People recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will do whatever it can to make those changes.
- 7.3** Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant women employees to attend ante-natal classes, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend ante-natal classes where necessary.
- 7.4** Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees regardless of length of service, to facilitate caring for children and other dependants. Requests for part-time working, job sharing, and flexitime will receive fair and equal consideration subject to operational requirements.
- 7.5** All staff will have an on-going Personal Development Plan and a yearly staff appraisal.

8. Service users Services:

- 8.1** Anyone applying for supported housing with Pathways for all People will either self-refer or be referred by other agencies to the director and will all be contacted by him/her. The equal opportunities policy will be adhered to at all times.
- 8.2** All service users will be made aware of the Pathways for all People complaints policy on entry to the project and by the information file in each house and will advise on how to make a complaint if they feel they have been harassed or discriminated against in any way.

9. Harassment:

- 9.1** Pathways for all People recognizes the devastating effect that harassment can have on the health and welfare of those affected by it. All staff and service users are entitled to a working or living environment which respects their personal dignity and is free from harassment.
- 9.2** Harassment and bullying may take many forms. These may include unwanted sexual or racial verbal remarks, sexual or racial written material sent to or displayed in view of the person, over-demanding or unreasonable demands especially of a junior colleague, unfavourable conduct based on a person's disability.
- 9.3** For staff, where the recipient of the unwanted conduct wishes to deal with it on an informal basis, the director will talk to them in confidence. Based on the wishes of the individual, they may either offer advice on how to approach the other individual to explain that their behaviour is unacceptable, or participate in an informal meeting between them, or approach the other individual on the person's behalf.
- 9.4** If the informal approach is not appropriate, or has been tried without success, a formal complaint may be made. The director will investigate this.
- 9.5** For service users, any member of staff receiving the report may provide informal advice, as above. If the complaint is against a member of staff, the service user should be advised that it must be reported to the manager. The service user's wishes will continue to be observed, subject to our policies on confidentiality, protection from abuse and legal responsibilities.
- 9.6** The investigation will be conducted sensitively, carefully, and thoroughly and with respect for the rights of the complainant and the alleged harasser. Everyone involved will be required to maintain confidentiality. Any person being interviewed may have a friend, colleague, or representative with them. Notes will be kept of all stages of the investigation and will be agreed with all parties. Unnecessary repetition of distressing or embarrassing details will be avoided.

Wherever possible, investigations will be completed within two weeks of the complaint being made. Wherever, possible arrangements will be made to avoid the complainant and the alleged harasser having to work together while the investigation is carried out.

9.7 If any member of staff is found to have harassed a service user or another member of staff, disciplinary action will be taken.

9.8 If a service user is found to have harassed a member of staff or another service user, they may be given notice to leave or be moved to another house, depending on the nature of the conduct.

10 Action Planning:

10.1 Pathways for all People embraces diversity and inclusion and demonstrates this in the work that we do.

10.2 We aim to ensure that discriminated against groups are fairly represented in our staff team and service users. We strive to uphold our recruitment in line with the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 *implementing good practice* Section 7, briefing :7.1

10.3 We will review our statistics on a yearly basis and any under-representation will be addressed in consultation with our stakeholders and local community and representative bodies.

10. Review and Monitoring:

11.1 Our staff and service user monitoring information will be reviewed yearly and reported to the director.

11.2 This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with our stakeholders to ensure implementation is being carried out effectively.

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