



# **Mind in Haringey**

## **Equality & Diversity Policy**

**Date: September 2015**

# **MIND IN HARINGEY**

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **Introduction**

This Policy combines the aspirations and detail of previous Mind in Haringey (MiH) Documents entitled “Equal Opportunities Policy”, “Equal Opportunities Guidelines” and “Anti-Discrimination Policy” which are now superseded.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to communicate Mind in Haringey’s commitment to equality and diversity and to describe the actions to be taken to promote and value these as an employer and mental health service provider. Mind in Haringey is aiming to create an environment in which individual differences and contributions of all staff and service users are recognized and valued. Mind in Haringey opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

This policy incorporates the organisation’s equal opportunities policy but broadens its base to reflect the Executive Committee’s commitment to the broader domains of diversity. The approach taken is in response to changes in external regulation. The policy is informed by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and ACAS guidance.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to Mind in Haringey’s governance arrangements as well as to all employees, volunteers, members and people who use services. It also sets out Mind in Haringey’s approach in dealing with contractors and suppliers.

### **Rationale**

Promoting and valuing diversity is central to the long-term impact and success of Mind in Haringey, helping the organisation develop and deliver modern and inclusive services, which promote user participation and involvement.

This policy is also necessary to comply with legislation and regulatory frameworks relating to equality. Specific current legislation and regulation includes:

The Equality Act 2010, The Human Rights Act 1998 and 2000; The Gender Recognition Act 2004; Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006; and the Regulations of Supporting People.

The law and regulation is subject to regular change. Mind in Haringey will comply with any other relevant law or regulation introduced during the life time of this policy.

### **Statement of Intent**

1. Mind in Haringey is committed to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination. The organisation exists to serve its local community by promoting mental health, combating prejudice and providing services for all who need them.
2. Mind in Haringey believes that there is a direct link between discrimination and oppression and mental distress, due to the effect it has on identity, self-esteem and opportunities to

achieve self fulfilment, and is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its own policies and procedures and in any other areas where it may have influence.

3. At the same time, the organisation positively values people's differences and welcomes the diversity that comes from staff, volunteers and service users who differ in characteristics such as age, ethnic background, faith, interests, sexual orientation, as long as we all subscribe to the key aim of the organisation to promote good mental health.

4. We therefore wish to work in a way which:

- Recognises that everyone is different and works to create an environment that includes everyone and is open to different points of view.
- Treats everyone fairly, no matter what their race, colour, ethnic background, religion, sex, sexuality, physical or mental disability, health status (including HIV and AIDS), appearance, age, marital status, parental status, and caring responsibilities.
- Employs and develops staff that reflect the communities we work in, and aims to achieve a good balance of people from different backgrounds at all levels of the organisation. We recruit staff fairly and openly to help us to achieve a varied workforce.
- Makes sure that any private contractors who provide services on our behalf show a commitment to equality and diversity by having fair employment practices and providing a consistent standard of customer service, and receive a copy of this policy.
- Ensures that the services provided by us are relevant and accessible to all sectors of the community we serve.
- Regularly reviews policies and practices relevant to equalities and diversity, and monitors our performance with regard to these.
- Takes action to introduce positive changes in policies and procedures in response to the results of monitoring, research, guidelines and good practice.
- Makes sure we meet best practice standards and our legal responsibilities, particularly under the Equality Act 2010.
- Promotes awareness of the causes, forms and effects of discrimination amongst its Trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and members.
- Works with others through local networks to eliminate stigma, discrimination and disadvantage, promote justice, and celebrate diversity.

5. This policy aims to ensure no job applicant, employee, volunteer, or service beneficiary is discriminated against either directly or indirectly because of their age, disability, faith, gender, race, sexuality, gender reassignment marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or any other ground in relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer or promote. Breaches of this policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings.

6. This policy aims to ensure that structures are in place to ensure we achieve the positive range of diversity which is in itself a hallmark of a healthy organisation serving all of the community.

7. MiH will take seriously, and will take action, where appropriate concerning all complaints of discrimination. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Organisation's Grievance or Complaints procedures.

## **Implementation**

Ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Board of Trustees. The Board will however, appoint a named Manager to be responsible for the operation of the policy.

### **1. Membership**

1.1 Membership of the organisation is open to all. Positive recruitment of people from local minority groups should be undertaken with sensitive planning of promotional material and by nurturing links with organisations representing these groups. Membership leaflets and application forms shall include a monitoring form inviting members to volunteer confidential information regarding gender, ethnicity, age and disabilities.

1.2 Members of the Organisation can be nominated for election to the Board of Trustees at its Annual General Meeting. This Board appoints standing and ad hoc Sub-Groups made up from elected members. In addition, individuals with knowledge and expertise of benefit to the Organisation may be nominated by the elected Board for co-option onto the Board of Directors or its subgroups.

1.3 Membership of the Board and Sub-Groups will be reviewed annually to identify any need for positive recruitment or co-opting which will make the organisation more representative of its general membership and the community it serves. It is a requirement for affiliation to National Mind that some of the Trustees are mental health service users.

1.4 Board members will be asked to complete a monitoring form providing confidential information regarding gender, ethnicity, age and disabilities.

### **2. Recruitment of Paid Staff and Volunteers**

2.1 The recruitment and selection process is crucial to any equal opportunities policy, and we recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce. MiH will endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates, adopting a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group, and where appropriate will take positive action to attract applications from all sections of society.

2.2 Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit, and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or subconsciously, in making these decisions.

2.3 Selection criteria and procedures will not discriminate unjustly on the grounds of gender, disability, marital status, pregnancy, maternity or paternity status, race, racial group, colour,

ethnic or national origin, culture, religion or belief or sexual orientation except where permitted under Equalities Legislation.

2.4 All employees involved in the recruitment process will review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

2.5 Short listing and interviewing for paid positions, and screening for volunteers, shall be carried out by more than one person.

2.6 Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

2.7 We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.

2.8 Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

2.9 The organisation will seriously consider any adjustments it needs to make in order to employ staff, or utilise volunteers, who are appropriate for the role, but have additional needs which require such adjustments.

### **3. Staff and Volunteers in Post**

3.1 The Organisation sets out, in its Employment Policy, its aim to apply fair and equitable employment practices at all times. Members of staff are encouraged to identify their support needs and discuss them with their supervisor.

3.2 For Volunteers, 'Time Out' of up to 12 months is available at any time, without jeopardising their future role. The same level of support and facility for 'time out' applies to volunteers serving on the Board of Trustees.

3.3 Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

3.4 Job descriptions will be reviewed to ensure that they are in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.

3.5 All staff and volunteers will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions

### **4. Monitoring**

4.1 Individuals applying for paid and voluntary work with Mind shall be invited to complete a monitoring form providing confidential information regarding gender, ethnicity, age and disabilities

4.2 We will maintain and review the records of all employees and volunteers in order to monitor the progress of this policy. We will maintain and review equal opportunities information relating to the applicants for paid and unpaid positions.

4.3 Monitoring may involve:-

- the collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/ national origin, the sex and disability.

- the examination by ethnic / national origin, sex and disability of the distribution of employees and volunteers and the success rate of the applicants.

- Recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees and volunteers, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

4.4 Confidential information regarding gender, age ethnicity and mental health problems will be obtained by means of monitoring forms and regular surveys within Mind services. This information will be fed into the organisation's monitoring system.

4.5 The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants, current staff and volunteers, and beneficiaries.

4.6 A report monitoring gender, ethnic or national origin, age and disabilities will be produced yearly for the Board of Trustees. This information will be used to review the progress and impact of the Policy. Any issues to be addressed from the report will be decided at this level and the Board will direct any actions to be taken to Managers.

4.7 Equalities shall be a standing item on the monthly staff meeting. An Equalities Champion shall be chosen from amongst the staff team to report, and to receive reports, on this item.

## **5. Services**

5.1 the organisation's services are designed to provide a welcoming, non-stigmatising environment for all, and to reflect positively on beneficiaries. Promotion of Mind services shall emphasise the ethos of 'accessibility' to individuals or groups with special physical, cultural, linguistic or emotional needs, with specific responses tailored to individual needs and circumstances. Promotional materials should portray individuals of both sexes, from a range of cultural backgrounds, age groups and with physical disabilities. Promotional Materials shall be made available in other formats, and in other languages, on request.

5.2 Staff should ensure that Mind beneficiaries understand that individual differences are valued in the organisation, and that harassment of others, for any reason, will not be tolerated. MiH reserves the right to bar beneficiaries from some or all services, for a defined period, where they continue to harass other beneficiaries.

5.3 Some services will be designed, in response to expressed need, to help specific groups of people (e.g. LGBT – Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered or BAME - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups) and will therefore not be open to all.

5.4 Where the organisation is contemplating using new or occasional premises for the delivery of any of its services, including public events and training, staff involved in the arranging of this shall review the accessibility of the venue, and associated services (e.g. catering) in line with the MiH Equalities ProForma. This shall be lodged with the Equalities Champion, who has the right to challenge assumption made and conclusions reached.

5.5 Where services are delivered in venues which are not fully accessible for particular known individuals who wish to avail themselves of these services, MiH shall move the venue of the service to one which is accessible to this person or persons in need.

5.6 Where possible within the budgetary constraints it faces, MiH shall, at its own cost, provided interpreters for clients seeking services who cannot manage through the medium of the English language.

## **6. Equality and Diversity Training**

6.1 Trustees, staff and volunteers undertake an induction programme when they join MiH. Awareness of equalities and diversity issues and implications for practice in Mind are promoted in particular sections in this training. Further issues arising from this, or otherwise occurring will be discussed at staff supervision or volunteer support sessions.

6.2 In addition, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers will be encouraged to undertake further training on Equalities and Diversity issues to enhance their work.

6.3 All employees and volunteers are expected to make sure that they understand the policy and pay due regard to it. They are all responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their paid work or voluntary placement.

## **7. Anti Discrimination Statement and Procedure for Breaches**

Mind in Haringey does not tolerate discriminatory practices by staff, trustees, volunteers, or anybody using Mind in Haringey's facilities and will display this summary statement at all premises.

Mind in Haringey services are for the use of all Haringey residents on condition that they keep to the rules and regulations of the Charity. It is the responsibility of all users, Mind in Haringey employees, volunteers and Committee members to ensure this policy is adhered to at all times.

Mind in Haringey is committed to the elimination of harassment, discrimination and prejudice experienced by individuals and groups on the basis of gender, gender reassignment status, race, nationality, sexuality, age, religious beliefs, economic background, marriage or civil partnership status, maternity status, disability or health status. Similarly, we oppose discrimination against or stigmatisation of people living with mental health issues.

We intend to implement this policy by:

- i) publicising the policy widely;
- ii) ensuring that all groups and individuals who use Mind in Haringey's services or are involved in its management are willing to implement this policy;
- iii) monitoring our employment practice, programmes, events, publicity and services to ensure that they lead to the elimination of discrimination within Mind in Haringey;
- iv) making sure that all job vacancies within Mind in Haringey are advertised and that there is no discrimination against any applicant, on any of the above grounds. Further, in the case of volunteer recruitment, Mind in Haringey will undertake to advertise as widely as possible.
- v) ensuring reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the inclusion of people with physical or mental disabilities

We will not tolerate the following behaviour at Mind in Haringey:

- i) attacks on individuals or groups on any of the above grounds;
- ii) discriminatory name-calling, insulting remarks, jokes or threats;
- iii) writing such remarks on walls or other places;
- iv) encouraging other people to harass or discriminate against another individual or group;
- v) provocative behaviour, such as wearing racist badges/fascist insignia;
- vi) bringing into the premises materials such as leaflets and magazines which in any way support the aforementioned discrimination.

In the event of any breach of Mind in Haringey's equality and diversity policy, a member of staff or the executive committee will:

- i) discuss the incident with the perpetrator, restating our position;
- ii) aid and support the abused party;
- iii) consider the possibility of suspension of the perpetrator from Mind in Haringey for a set period of time (in cases of physical attack, suspension will be immediate);
- iv) take disciplinary action against the perpetrator if it is a member of staff.
- iv) make a report of the incident and the action taken and inform the Chair of the Executive Committee.

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Managing Diversity**

The concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of employees and members and users will also be diverse.

This diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences, including factors such as gender, age, background, race, disability, mental health status, personality and work style. It is founded on the belief that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment where everybody feels valued and where talents are being fully used to meet organisational goals.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Treating everybody fairly and equally regardless of their background or lifestyle.

### **Direct Discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another, for example, on the grounds of their race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability (including mental illness), living with HIV or other blood borne virus, religion or belief age, marital status, caring responsibilities, gender re-assignment or age.

### **Indirect Discrimination**

This includes practices which look fair, but which are unfairly discriminatory in their effect. For example a job may make a requirement or condition which may be applied equally to everyone, but which has a disadvantageous effect on people of one gender or ethnic group, because a considerably smaller proportion of them can comply with it and its use is not justified by a 'real need'.

### **Disability Discrimination**

Disability discrimination occurs when, for a reason related to his/her disability, a disabled person is treated less favourably than other people, and this treatment cannot be justified. It also occurs when an employer or service provider fails to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the disabled person, and the failure cannot be justified. An employer cannot justify less favourable treatment if, by making a reasonable adjustment, it would remove the reason for the treatment.

### **Reasonable Adjustment**

A reasonable adjustment is any step or steps an employer can reasonably take to prevent arrangements made by them or physical features of premises occupied by them from putting a disabled person at a disadvantage in comparison with a non-disabled person.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because that person has, for example, asserted rights under any of the discrimination laws or has helped another person to assert such rights or given information to the relevant statutory body, or because it is suspected that the person might do any of these things.

### **Harassment**

Harassment occurs where, on grounds of race, colour, gender, disability, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, age (or any other personal characteristic) a person is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose (intentionally) or effect (unintentionally) of: (i) violating that person's dignity; or, (ii) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.