



Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

- We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and committed to the purpose of this policy, which is to promote Equal Opportunities and combat discrimination, direct or indirect, in the provision of our services, our volunteer and employment practice and our committee and decision making structure.
- We will ensure equality of opportunity irrespective of gender, marital status, age, race, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, health including HIV status, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activity and geographical location.
- Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.
- We will use The Equality Act 2010 and future legislation as a framework on which to develop and promote good practice
- This policy will be made known to people with learning disabilities and their families, volunteers, employees and committee members.
- This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

2. Access to services

- Families that include a member with learning disabilities can find it difficult to access services, particularly in a rural area such as the Scottish Borders. This is emphasised in the Scottish Borders Carers Strategy. People with learning disabilities who live independently may also not be aware of what is available and how to access it.
- We therefore have a duty to be pro-active in ensuring that everyone eligible for our services knows about them and is able to access them. To this end we will work with other third sector organisations, schools and statutory bodies to identify people who might benefit from our projects and ensure they have access to information. We will also publicise our projects in the media and at local events and carry out area-wide poster and leaflet campaigns at regular intervals.
- Once we know about potential service users we must ensure we contact them swiftly and ensure access is made as easy as possible by, for example, meeting at their home, taking their communication and physical needs into consideration and creating links that are as convenient as possible.
- We will ensure that our systems and processes have equality of access at their heart: our core aim is to provide people with learning disabilities opportunities that are equal to their non-disabled peers and this must inform everything that we do.

3. Representation on Committees

- We will ensure we have representation of all stakeholder groups and a broad spread of skills and experience and on our board and branch committees, including:
 - ❖ People with learning disabilities,
 - ❖ Family and professional carers,
 - ❖ Volunteers
 - ❖ Representatives of other organisations we work closely with, such as social care services
- We will also appoint special advisors where people are unable to formally sit on the board.
- We will ensure that equality of access is maintained in our publicity about being elected to committees, information, induction, support, training, working environment and committee procedures are such that there is equality
- Members of Our Committees will have access to training on Equality and Diversity

4. Employment

- We will ensure that those who are involved in the recruitment and management of employees and volunteers are aware of their duty to be non-discriminatory and promote equality and diversity in all areas, including:
 - ❖ Recruitment and selection procedures
 - ❖ Training and development
 - ❖ Support & supervision
 - ❖ Harassment, victimisation and confidentiality
 - ❖ Promotion procedures
 - ❖ Induction programmes
 - ❖ Dependant responsibility leave
 - ❖ Leave for Public duties
 - ❖ Special leave
 - ❖ Working environment
 - ❖ Pensions
 - ❖ and all our other Terms and Conditions of employment.
- Terms and conditions of service will apply equally to full-time, part-time, permanent or fixed term contract members of staff.

5. Volunteers

- We will ensure that those who are involved in the recruitment and management of employees and volunteers are aware of their duty to be non-discriminatory and promote equality and diversity in all areas, including:
 - ❖ Recruitment and selection procedures
 - ❖ Training and development
 - ❖ Support & supervision
 - ❖ Harassment, victimisation and confidentiality
 - ❖ Induction programmes

- ❖ Leave for any reason
- ❖ Working environment

6. Implementation of this policy

- The Project Co-ordinator has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. All board and committee members, employees and volunteers have responsibilities to abide by this policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.
- In order to implement this policy we shall:
 - ❖ Communicate the policy to board and committee members, employees and volunteers.
 - ❖ Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy into staff job descriptions where appropriate.
 - ❖ Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate.
 - ❖ Ensure that those who are involved in the recruitment and management of employees and volunteers are aware of their duty to be non-discriminatory.

7. Monitoring, Review and Breach.

- Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy will be the Project Co-ordinator's
- We will review this policy annually.
- Breach of the Policy will be considered to be a serious matter and disciplinary proceedings will automatically be considered. Complaints received from people with learning disabilities, carers, committee and board members, volunteers, employees, and other organisations or individuals will be dealt under the Complaints Policy or our grievance procedures as appropriate.