



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. POLICY OUTLINE

This policy will enable Future Living Hertford (FLH) to demonstrate its commitment encouraging equality and diversity amongst its workforce and service users.

FLH is committed to encouraging equality and diversity amongst our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our clients, and for each employee to feel respected and be able to give their best.

The organisation, in providing services and facilities, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of its service users and the public.

1.1 Dissemination

This Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to staff, Trustees, and volunteers during their Induction process.

1.2 Recruitment

Future Living Hertford is committed to oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination and to recruit in a way that does not discriminate against any individuals.

2. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and Trustees of FLH.

The policy is supplemental to current U.K. legislation and guidance. In the case of any contradictions between this policy and current U.K. law, U.K. legislation will take precedence.

This policy should be read in conjunction with FLH's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure which is to be referred to in situations where intimidation, verbal abuse, physical abuse or violence occurs or is suspected amongst or towards staff members, volunteers, Trustees or Service Users.

3. PRINCIPLES

Future Living Hertford opposes discrimination in all its forms, including discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, age, social class, creed, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, physical appearance, disability or special needs.

FLH believes that all its workers, volunteers and clients have the right to be treated with respect and in an environment free from discrimination, intimidation, verbal or physical abuse or violence.

The policy's purpose is to:

- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- Provide an environment of fairness and respect for all of our service users
- Not unlawfully discriminate against any person because of age, disability, gender or gender reassignment, being or becoming a transsexual person, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity or being a parent, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief (or lack of), sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- Oppose all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy leave for parents, requests for flexible working and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and an environment where the contributions of all staff are recognized and valued
- Take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination by employees, service users, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff should understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination committed in the course of their employment. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct and the organisation's Grievance and/or Disciplinary procedures and appropriate action will be taken. Serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an Employment Rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic, is a criminal offence.

5. COMPLIANCE

It is the responsibility of Future Living Hertford's Trustees, Executive and Strategic Leadership Team

to ensure compliance and the effectiveness of the procedure accompanying this policy.

6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All client services policies
Recruitment policy
Disciplinary procedures
Grievance procedures
Bullying and Harassment policy

7. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy aims to work within the framework of the following legislation, and any supplemental laws or guidance that are introduced:

Equality Act 2006
Equal Pay Act 1976
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Race Relations Act 1976
Amendment 2000
The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Employment Act 2002
The Employment Equality (age) Regulations 2003
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
Employment Equality Regulations (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
Protection from Harassment Act 1997



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PROCEDURE

COUNTERING DISCRIMINATION AT FUTURE LIVING HERTFORD

1. CONTEXT

Future Living Hertford (FLH) is committed to:

- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential so that their talents and resources can be fully-utilised to maximize the efficiency of the organisation
- Basing decisions concerning all staff on merit (apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures where necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- Monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in order to encourage equality and diversity and to meet the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality Policy and any supporting action plan are working in practice, reviewing them annually and considering and taking action to address any issues.

2. APPLICATION

2.1 Advertising and publicity

When producing any literature for its clients, staff and members of the public, FLH staff should take account of the following guidelines which aim to ensure that our stance on equality and diversity is communicated clearly to everybody who comes into contact with the charity:

- Publicity materials should use pictorial as well as written means where appropriate
- It may be useful to consider adding statements or producing materials in languages other than English
- Make sure that poster and leaflet displays that are widely accessible
- Use illustrations to depict all sections of the local community
- Use language which is easily understandable and avoiding the use of jargon, abbreviations and ambiguity

2.2. Access to premises and services

- Access ramps to the building are provided for wheelchair users.
- Guide and service dogs are welcome in the premises.
- There are disabled toilet facilities within the building

As FLH's treatment approach is talk-based psycho-social intervention it is vital that we enable those with hearing impairments or little English language to participate in communication. Therefore:

- Individual hearing loops are available for use in the Group Room
- Those with little or limited understanding of the English language are encouraged to bring a companion who can translate for them if necessary.
- Those with sensory disabilities are encouraged to bring a companion who can sign for them if necessary

We aim to treat everybody with respect, and to encourage diversity in our client-base. We intend to reflect this by implementing the following rules/guidelines within our organisation:

- Race/ethnicity – website images and literature will show a mix of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Age – décor should be neutral and not aimed at any particular generation
- Social class – our services are free to access; counselling will be offered to members of the public at a cost which takes into consideration their means and ability to pay
- Creed and religious beliefs – we will ensure that any literature we produce explains that whilst we are a Christian-based charity we do not seek to proselytise
- Sexual orientation – we will endeavour to publish Case Studies that include LGBT persons experiences

2.3 Recruitment and selection

The intention of advertisement, recruitment and selection procedures is to ensure that all vacancies are filled by the most appropriate qualified personnel (See Recruitment Procedures).

All paid appointments will be made on the basis of advertised recruitment.

Future Living Hertford will endeavour, through appropriate training, to ensure that employees making selection decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions and that current legislation and guidance on advertisement, recruitment and selection will be followed.

2.4 Training, promotion and career development

Appropriate training will be provided without discrimination to all staff to enable them to perform their jobs effectively and to pursue career development opportunities.

Age limits for entry into training shall not be unnecessarily restrictive so as to exclude certain groups of staff.

All staff members and volunteers will undergo an induction process which will include a discussion on our policies and procedures.

3. IDENTIFYING SPECIAL NEEDS FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND SERVICE USERS

During the client assessment process any special needs that the client has will be identified and these will be communicated to staff members before they start to work with that client so that any special necessary arrangements can be made to accommodate the client's needs.

For staff, any special needs will be identified at the interview stage. These will be communicated to other staff on a need-to-know basis, taking into account any wishes expressed by the recruited volunteer or staff member regarding confidentiality and privacy.

It is the responsibility of the C.E.O. to ensure that all employees and volunteers recognise any special needs of each individual client and/or staff member or volunteer.

4. MONITORING

4.1 Staff members and Volunteers

Monitoring will involve the collection and classification of information regarding the age, gender and ethnic origin of all current workers and job applicants; an analysis of age, gender and ethnic origin of the distribution of workers, the success rate of job applicants, recording details of the recruitment process, training and promotional events of all employees.

Staff will be surveyed annually as part of appraisal process and asked if they feel they are treated fairly in the workplace; feedback will inform forward planning in the coming year.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis - Clients

Collection and classification of client data by ethnic origin/social class/sexuality/disability/HIV status are recorded when appropriate to the client's needs and with their knowledge. This information is used to make reports to The Board of Trustees quarterly and where there is a disparity between those accessing the service and the community profile, actions will be taken accordingly.

In addition, the staff and volunteer profile will be monitored annually and where there is a discrepancy between the composition of workers and the local profile, actions will be incorporated into the operational plan by the C.E.O. All stakeholders will be consulted before ratification by The Board of Trustees.

4.3 Client Surveys

As part of the projects annual operational plan, clients will be surveyed on their experience of the service, which will include questions on the accessibility of the service. (Planning Policy and Procedures.)

4.4 Related Policies and Procedures

All monitoring will comply with U.K. legislation. Our Data Protection, Confidentiality and Recruitment procedures apply.

We also produce literature for clients that explains FLH's policy regarding confidentiality.

5. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

In addition to honouring the legal requirements to investigate allegations of racial or sexual harassment or discrimination, Future Living Hertford will also investigate clients' allegations of other forms of discrimination defined in the Policy Statement related to this procedure or those arising from any U.K. legislation.

All allegations of abuse or harassment will be investigated and if found to be substantiated, will be the subject of disciplinary action (see FLH's Disciplinary Procedures)

5.1 Complaints Process

It is recognised that clients may find it difficult to approach their key worker on matters of discrimination. Therefore, complaints or grievances should be directed, in the first instance, to the C.E.O. This can be done in writing or by appointment. Should a meeting be requested then the person making the complaint may bring a translator or helper to assist with communication.

For staff, volunteers and any other people who are not clients of the organisation any complaints should first be made to the C.E.O. in the first instance.

5.2 Escalation

Should a satisfactory response not be forthcoming then the person making the complaint will be helped to contact a member of the Executive Committee for investigation and resolution.

6. REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE

6.1 Responsibility

Whilst it is expected that all workers within Future Living Hertford will accept personal responsibility for the practical application of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedures, lead responsibility for its implementation will rest with the Trustees and the C.E.O.

6.2 Review Process

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually by the C.E.O. and checked to ensure that it complies with legislative requirements. Any staff that become aware of changes to the law that may affect these procedures, or who wishes to make recommendations to enhance the policy is encouraged to do so by email to the C.E.O. in the first instance.

Any revisions to this document will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for ratification.