

Equality and Diversity Policy

| This document is relevant to: | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Trustees | ✓ |
| Staff | ✓ |
| Volunteers | ✓ |

Purpose

Dorset Mind wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality and diversity in employment. We aim to encourage, value and manage diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population. Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality of opportunity, it is in the best interest of Dorset Mind to recruit and develop the best people for our jobs from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible.

Policy

Dorset Mind recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination. Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through, for example, exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect (where there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and cannot be justified).

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Employees and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with Dorset Mind to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

Statement of Intent

Dorset Mind aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.

We are committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local community in which we operate.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all aspects of their employment, engagement or whilst volunteering at Dorset Mind.

Our aim is that the workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society. Selection for employment or promotion or any other benefit will be on the basis of merit and ability only. Selection for training will be on the basis of job requirement only. Intimidation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action. Details of how harassment and bullying will be tackled are covered in Dorset Mind's separate 'Bullying and Harassment' policy for employees. Separate complaint policies are available for volunteers and others.

Dorset Mind will challenge discrimination in its own policies. It aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants or employees whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary. It aims to ensure that no job applicant or worker receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

Implementation

Each employee, volunteer, consultant, trainer, facilitator or Board of Trustees member is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees, appropriate action against a member of the Board of Trustees, termination of contracts for services of consultants or trainers, or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.

Employees who feel they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with their line manager. Initially the employee and manager should aim to resolve the matter informally. It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and easily resolved once the problem is clear.

If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint is very serious, or their line manager is the cause of the complaint, the employee should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal grievance under Dorset Mind's Grievance Procedure. Employees may also use Dorset Mind's Bullying and Harassment Policy if appropriate.

Dorset Mind will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, and Board members will receive induction on the policy and that consultants, trainers and facilitators will be fully informed.

Appropriate training and guidance will be provided to develop equality and diversity. Adequate resources will be made available to fulfil the aims of this policy. The policy will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available and displayed in Dorset Mind's offices.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive is responsible for managing this policy and overseeing its implementation. Senior Managers are responsible for implementing the policy within their areas of work, and for overseeing adherence by staff and volunteers. Every member of staff and every volunteer should take personal responsibility for conforming to it.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Grievance Procedure

The equality impact of this policy has been considered and Dorset Mind believes that it complies with its commitment to equality as stated in its Equality Policy

Policy Ownership

| Policy Name | Version | Doc ref |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Equality and Diversity Policy | 2.0 | Equality and Diversity Policy |

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| Policy Owner | Chair of Trustees |
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Approval Status

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Date adopted by Trustees | January 2016 | | |
| Date published | January 2016 | Date for next review | January 2018 |

Consult the Dorset Mind website for the latest version of this policy.

Document Control

Reviewers

| Name | Position |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Chris Price | Chair of Trustees |
| Rob Griffith | Staff |
| Jane Kilpatrick | Trustee |

Change History

| Issue | Date | Author | Reason |
|-------|--------|-------------------|------------|
| 1.0 | Jan 15 | Jackie Lillywhite | New policy |
| 2.0 | Dec 15 | Chris Price | Revision |