

Survivors' Network Equality and Diversity Policy
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Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy statement

The purpose of this document is to communicate Survivors' Network's commitment to tackling all forms of discrimination and inequality in the workplace and the services it gives by setting out how it will promote equality of opportunity and to prevent all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Survivors' Network is committed to creating and safeguarding an inclusive environment, where discrimination on any grounds is challenged and equality of opportunity is promoted. The promotion of diversity and inclusion and the genuine equality of opportunity for all are central to ensuring fair employment and high quality service provision. Survivors' Network will ensure that in the development and implementation of employment procedures and service provision, no person or group of people will experience discriminatory practice or barriers to inclusion.

Survivors' Network will actively work towards eliminating discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion/belief, marriage/civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy. Discrimination within Survivors' Network will be challenged at all levels of the organisation, including Management Committee, paid staff, volunteers and service users.

Survivors' Network is an equal opportunities employer. Our policy is to ensure that no employee, volunteer, trustee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of ethnicity, faith/religion, age, gender identity, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, disability, maternity or pregnancy, or that they are disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown as justifiable. Employees will be given equal opportunities and, where appropriate, training to enable them to progress within the organisation.

Survivors' Network will constantly strive to create an environment representative of and responsive to the communities in which it works, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed in their work and access services.

All Survivors' Network staff and volunteers are required to adhere to this Policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings.

This Policy embodies the principles within the Equality Act (2010).

Procedure

All staff and volunteers at Survivors' Network hold equal responsibility for implementing and upholding this Policy.

Every employee has a responsibility to:

- respect and promote equal opportunities for all people
- encourage harmony and understanding in society
- recognise and oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination
- challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as discrimination
- remove both outward and hidden discrimination
- enable differences to become positive and enriching attributes
- develop each person's skills to the highest possible level
- promote an environment where all can share equally in the opportunities offered
- understand what is expected of them in terms of performance, the standards they seek to achieve, their behaviour and conduct towards others
- not discriminate against service users or colleagues (both paid and unpaid)

All reasonable adjustments will be made by Survivors' Network to ensure equality of access to services and employment for all women

Any instance of doubt about the application of the Policy, or other questions, should be addressed to a service Coordinator, the Director or the Chair of Trustees as appropriate, as should any requests for special training.

Where a staff member or volunteer is found to be in breach of this Policy, disciplinary action may be taken, including but not limited to compulsory attendance at equalities training, or any training deemed appropriate and necessary; review of their work practices and records; and dismissal.

Where a volunteer, including a trustee, is found to be in breach of this Policy, they will face the same sanctions as paid staff members.

Service users found to be acting in a discriminatory manner to other service users or members of staff will have this Policy explained to them and their behaviour challenged in a respectful and appropriate manner. If they continue to engage in discriminatory behaviour, they may be asked to leave the organisation if it is believed their actions limit the ability of others to access services, or place other people at risk in any way.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics". Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. In addition, Survivors' Network has an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a person because they are pregnant.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement, e.g. when providing a women-only space. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination) such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and (according to guidance from the Government and Acas) pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities in employment

We are committed to ensuring that individuals will be treated fairly and we require all members of staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to act in accordance the employment legislation and organisational values set out in this policy.

Survivors' Network are committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Survivors' Network will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices. Survivors' Network will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Dignity at work

Survivors' Network has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

Your responsibilities

All members of staff have a duty to support and uphold the principles of our equal opportunities policy and its supporting policies. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Survivors' Network for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

Survivors' Network will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring

Employees, service users, and job applicants may be asked for information or to complete a form denoting their ethnicity, age, religion, status as disabled or sexual orientation or gender status. Survivors Network guarantees that this information will only be used for the purposes of equalities monitoring. No information will be distributed internally or externally, except for anonymised information used for the express purposes of monitoring.

Our commitment:

- We will endeavour to ensure our services are known, accessible and relevant to women from all sections of the community
- We will create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff/volunteers are recognised and valued, and everyone who has contact with the Centre experiences an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all
- We will make every effort so that training, development and career opportunities are available to all staff and, as appropriate, to all volunteers
- We will assess equality impact and undertake regular reviews (of policies, practices and procedures) to identify and tackle any unintentional discrimination we may find in the provision of our services and internal practices
- We will challenge discrimination in all its forms, in line with our organisational values
- Our recruitment processes for staff, volunteers and trustees will be fair, transparent and open in line with our Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Every person volunteering or working for SN has a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting our principles in their day-to-day dealings with everyone – including members of the public, other volunteers and staff. Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings, in line with our grievance policy.