**MRS Independent Living**

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| **Policy and guidance topic** | **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** |
| **Last updated** | **May 2021** |
| **Approved by trustees** | **August 2021** |
| **Due for review** | **June 2022 or whenever any further legislation is enacted** |

**Introduction**

MRS Independent Living (MRS) is committed to ensuring equality, eliminating discrimination and harassment, and encouraging and supporting diversity and inclusion amongst our service users and within our organisation. This policy makes public our commitment to go beyond basic compliance wherever possible in order to improve equality and diversity both in the workplace and through service delivery.

The policy helps ensure that we are compliant with relevant equalities legislation, the Equality Act 2010 and any other statutory requirements.  Should any further legislation on equalities be enacted, this policy will be reviewed to ensure compliance with any new requirements.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equality of treatment, access to services and fairness for all our service users, trustees, employees and volunteers. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, race, ethnic origin, nationality, pregnancy or parenthood, disability or religion/belief (or lack thereof).

This policy is fully supported by the Trustees and the management team and has been agreed with staff representatives. A Diversity Action plan, agreed in ? December 2020 has been implemented which aims to increase diversity, equality and inclusion within the organisation's trustees, staff and volunteers and to improve MRS' engagement with the diverse communities within the boroughs in which we work.

**Our commitment to service users, trustees, staff and volunteers is to ensure that:**

* MRS creates and maintains an environment in which individual differences are celebrated and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.
* MRS provides services that understand and respond to the needs experienced by service users from the wide range of diverse communities in the areas we serve.
* MRS works with service users and provides an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. Any form of intimidation, bullying or harassment by either staff or by the service users themselves will not be tolerated and may result in action under this policy
* Every staff member and volunteer works in an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. Any form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and action will be taken to address this.
* Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff and/or volunteers.
* Breaches of this policy are regarded as misconduct and will lead to an initial informal investigation which could lead to a formal investigation.If the breach is substantiated this will lead to disciplinary proceedings.
* This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually. We will also undertake an annual review of our processes and procedures to ensure compliance with the policy.

**Our approach**

Our approach to equality and diversity applies to service users, trustees, staff and volunteers and is based on the principles of:

* **Fairness:** working in a way that promotes equality and diversity andthat does not discriminate
* **Respect:** working in partnership toencourage a culture where everyone receives respect and can voice their diverse needs, knowing that they will be heard and taken notice of..
* **Honesty and accountability:** working to ensure that our practices are transparent andopen to scrutiny and challenge.
* **Providing opportunity:** working towards a culture where all have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
* **Expertise and excellence:** working to high standards to ensure thatthe diverse needs of service users are recognised and met.

Our aim is that our trustees and workforce will be truly representative of our diverse society and that each trustee, employee and volunteer feels respected and able to give of their best. Our recruitment processes support this approach and aim to ensure that the best possible candidate is chosen.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of role requirement, aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

**Dealing with an incident of discrimination and harassment**

MRS takes complaints of discrimination and harassment very seriously, if an allegation is made, flowcharts in the **Appendices** attached to this Policy give the specific actions that will be taken for a complaint from

* **Appendix 1** details the process taken for a complaint from a trustee, staff member or volunteer towards another trustee, staff member of volunteer
* **Appendix 2** details the process taken for a complaint made by a service user towards a member of staff, trustee or volunteer
* **Appendix 3** details the process taken for a complaint made by a trustee, staff member or volunteer towards a service user.

**Monitoring compliance with the policy**

* MRS will provide keep records of the number of complaints under this policy and how they were resolved.
* If more than two complaints are made against a member of staff in any financial year, further action may be taken against them
* If service users continue to be discriminatory against member/s of staff, the Director and trustees will decide whether any service they are currently or might in future receive, should be continued.
* MRS will review policies and processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose
* MRS will provide trustees with an end of year report each April which will give details of any complaints that have been made and their resolution

**Other relevant policies**

Other policies which may be used to ensure compliance with the Equalities. Diversity and Inclusion policy are the Grievance Policy the Disciplinary Policy and the Complaints Policy.