

## Equal Opportunities, Equality And Diversity Policy

**Who is responsible: Head of Service And Quality is Islington Mind's Equality Officer who is responsible to ensure this policy is implemented.**

All trustees, employees, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Islington Mind to do everything they can to ensure that the policy is implemented.

*People involved: all staff, volunteers, visitors, service users*

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### **A. INTRODUCTION STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Islington Mind is committed to achieving equal opportunities as an employer as well as service provider, and to creating an environment in which individual differences and contributions of all staff, volunteers and users of services are recognized and valued.

Throughout this document, the term volunteer includes trustees.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and/or bias; no user of Islington Mind's services, employee, trustee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment based on the protected characteristics as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment,

marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

As an employer and provider of a service to the community, Islington Mind accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs.

We regard all forms of discrimination as unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

We treat everyone with dignity and respect, and we value each other's differences, creating a culture that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

We are committed to removing 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 know the impact of Covid-19 has greatly exacerbated pre-existing inequalities across communities such as inequalities experienced by people from racialised and/or LGBTIQ+ communities and/or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Expanding reach and engagement with marginalised communities is at the top of our agenda, and promoting equality and diversity is one of our key values.

We recognise that some clients and users of our services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Islington Mind's Equal Opportunities Equality and Diversity Policy. Islington Mind will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible an approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.

Team Leaders on duty are responsible to ensure that our policies are followed (e.g. Personal Risk Management, Safeguarding, Violence, Abuse and Harassment and other policies) and for recording all unusual incidents (please refer Accidents, Incidents Recording Policy and Serious Incidents Policy).

Islington Mind recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to employment and the reasonable adjustments it must make to ensure that people with protected characteristics are not discriminated against in

recruitment or in the workplace, neither there are pay gaps between different people employed for the same role. Islington Mind keeps all its policies under review to ensure that they do not discriminate against people.

## B. RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of Service and Quality is Islington Mind's Equality Officer and is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented.

All Islington Mind's employees, job applicants, volunteers and service users should be aware of this policy.

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, trustees and service users to ensure that no other service user, volunteer, trustee or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated above.

Staff members who supervise volunteers to are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are aware of Mind's Equal Opportunities Equality And Diversity Policy and adhere to it while working as Mind volunteers.

Everyone at Islington Mind has a duty to co-operate with our organisation in ensuring equal opportunities and preventing discrimination. Employees should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment. Line managers are responsible for keeping record of such incidents, including the actions they took.

Please refer to our Abuse, Harassment and Violence (service users) Policy and to our Harassment Of Employees Policy

## C. POSITIVE ACTION

At Islington Mind we believe that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that active positive steps should be taken to improve equality in in our workplace.

Islington Mind is committed to:

### Accessibility of Services

We ensure our services are equally accessible by:

1. Ensuring any eligibility criteria relevant to a service is made widely available and referral procedures are flexible. Any person who feels they have been unfairly denied access to a service has the right to appeal.
- 2. Creating a welcoming environment which represents and includes everyone**

3. creating a space that embraces and works with different physical and mental abilities, including assessing service environments for disability access and making adjustments where possible to support service users and staff with disability access needs.
4. Being clear what we can/cannot do where there are limited resources
5. Targeting groups and communities that are under-represented. These will be identified through community mapping and monitoring.
6. Embedding a client-lead approach in designing services, ensuring all our services meet the needs of people in Islington communities.

## Co-Production

We actively promote the involvement and co produce our services with the people who use them by:

1. Recognising that people who use our services are an expert resource.
2. Creating and evolving a variety of means of consultation and engaging with a wide spectrum of audience
3. Actively involving people who use our services in recruitment of all posts in the organisation.
4. Taking steps to ensure that the Board of Trustees includes people who have experienced mental health issues.
5. Offering flexible volunteering opportunities to service users, so they become 'service providers' themselves.
6. Where we propose to use temporary staff, we will aim to employ people with lived experience of mental health problems or other disabilities in the hope that long-term job opportunities within Islington Mind will be found for them
7. Running a regular All Islington Mind Co-Production group (lead by Head of Service and Quality)
8. Providing training on Co-Production to services users, staff and volunteers

## Actively Challenge Discrimination

Everyone at Islington Mind, managers, trustees, team leaders, staff, volunteers and all employees are responsible to actively challenge discriminatory practice, abuse, harassment and victimisation by:

1. Ensuring staff, volunteers, peer supporters and people who use our services are aware of their rights and obligations with regard to equal opportunities.
2. Reserving the right to withdraw services from a person if they behave in a discriminatory, disruptive or abusive manner.
3. Encouraging access from under-represented groups
4. Ensuring people are aware of their rights to report allegations of discrimination and address disincentives to reporting.

5. Having a clear complaints policy for people who use and come into contact with our services.
6. Ensuring grievance and disciplinary procedures reflect good practice and equal opportunities.
7. Investigating unfounded or malicious (falsified) complaints or allegations and treating them as a serious matter.
8. Ensuring unlawful discrimination is reported to the police and the Safeguarding Adults Board.
9. Recognising that discriminatory practice can be subtle and unconscious and
10. Promoting an honest working atmosphere where constructive challenge is welcomed.

## **Culture of Respect For Diversity**

All staff are responsible to actively promote cultural awareness and a respect for diversity by:

1. Celebrating achievements and celebrations of different cultures and groups (Black History Month Celebration, LGBTIQ+ Pride Month, Trans Awareness Month)
2. Responding to the specific needs of minority groups underserved by services (LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees)
3. Using translation services where appropriate.
4. Ensuring through training and supervision that our services are cultural competence and that our staff team work effectively cross culturally
5. Building relationships through community events.
6. Working closely in partnership with local communities and faith groups.

## **Diverse Recruitment**

We want our teams to represent the demographics of the people we support.

Managers are responsible to ensure that our diverse recruitment procedures include:

1. Job descriptions and person specifications do not have requirements that unnecessarily exclude applicants from meeting the criteria
2. Applicants' needs are considered throughout the recruitment process
3. In most circumstances we advertise job vacancies internally first to encourage service users and volunteers to apply
4. Externally advertised posts are aimed at reaching as wide a section of the population as possible within available resources.
5. Stating in all advertisements that Islington Mind is seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer.
6. Indicating in job/volunteering application forms that life experience is valid as well as formal qualifications and work experience.

## **Training, Development and Supervision**

Managers are responsible for identifying and addressing training gaps and ensuring that staff, volunteers, peer supporters and trustees are expected to operate best practice in terms of fairness and diversity. This is done by:

1. Ensuring all aspects of this policy are reflected in the induction processes of staff and volunteers.
2. Staff attend mandatory equality and diversity training.
3. Operating robust appraisal and supervision procedures.
4. Addressing serious concerns through staff management procedures such as supervision, probationary review, appraisals, code of conduct and disciplinary process.

## **Collecting And Analysing Demographics Data**

Managers and team leaders are responsible to collect, analyse and identify trends in demographic data, and to plan and implement improvements in outreach and service provision accordingly.

## **Publicity and communication**

Team Leaders and managers are responsible to ensure that:

1. Positive and inclusive images are promoted in literature and publicity materials
2. Both printed and online communication routes are used, reducing the risks that some of our audiences will be 'left behind'.
3. Using interpreters and translation services where necessary.

## **Partnerships**

Managers are responsible to ensure that we learn from good practice of other organisations and are responsible in our working relationships. We do this by:

1. Sharing practice with partner agencies.
2. Only entering agreements that support the principle of this policy.
3. Promoting honest working relationships where constructive challenge is welcomed.

## **Governance**

Managers and trustees aim to ensure the Board of Trustees has a membership that reflects the wider community by:

1. Ensuring that 50% of our trustees have lived experience of mental health problems.
2. Making resources available to provide adequate training and support for trustees.
3. Conducting a periodic audit to identify gaps and ensure a good skill mix.

4. Clearly describing the role and responsibilities of trustees and the skills/experience required.
5. Actively recruiting trustees to fill gaps revealed in audits including trustees with experience of using mental health services.

## D. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

If any service user, volunteer or employee feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with either: their line manager in the case of staff OR the equal opportunities officer OR the manager/key worker of the project where the alleged discrimination occurred.

Any team leader or manager receiving a complaint of discriminatory behaviour is responsible for ensuring this is treated seriously.

Managers are also responsible for ensuring complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature are treated as serious and may involve using the disciplinary procedure.

## E. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Managers are responsible for supporting our employees and service users to recognise and develop potential which has not been used before because of past discrimination and disadvantage. Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees will be encouraged by their line manager to go on courses relevant to their present job or personal development.

## F. WORKING CONDITIONS

Islington Mind aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants or employees whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary. No Employee of Islington Mind receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic described in the Equality Act 2010 (see above.)

Managers are responsible for ensuring that intimidation, harassment and bullying are not tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action.

### **Pregnancy**

Islington Mind recognises that pregnant people may need changes to their work conditions and managers are responsible for considering sympathetically any requests for such changes.

### **Antenatal Care**

Managers are responsible for ensuring time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant employees to attend antenatal classes, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Partners sharing responsibility

for childcare will also receive time off to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

### **Flexible Hours and Job Sharing**

Managers are responsible for ensuring working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees with no qualifying length of service, to facilitate the caring for children and other dependants. Requests for job sharing or part-time working to meet employees' needs for shorter hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

### **Accessible Buildings**

Islington Mind will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all its premises are fully accessible. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

## **G. USE OF LANGUAGE**

Staff, volunteers and service users will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles;

- disabled groups and/or individuals with special needs
- any race, culture or religion
- a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- women and/or men
- a person's age

Staff, volunteers and service users should always use the name, pronoun or term a person requests in written and verbal communication with them.

If in doubt, the person should be asked how they want to be addressed and they should then be responded to accordingly.

Managers are responsible for ensuring where the language used has a personal impact on others, it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, and that disciplinary action (employees) or exclusion (service users) may be taken if they persist with it.

Any person responsible for promotion materials used or developed by Islington Mind is responsible for judging these in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

## **H. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**



Managers are responsible for ensuring that no member of staff, volunteer or service user is subject to sexual harassment, including any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature such as:

- Repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive
- Verbal sexual abuse
- Physical contact

If it has been made clear by a member of staff to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user, volunteer or employee who is the recipient of the behaviour will be encouraged to make a formal complaint.

## **I. MONITORING OF THIS POLICY**

It is the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity Officer (currently Head of Services and Quality) to advise, inform and consult with management, staff and service users in order to progress and improve equal opportunities, equality and diversity within Islington Mind.

The Equality and Diversity Office Officer will:

1. Familiarise themselves with appropriate and up to date information, legislation, policy, etc. for the purposes of carrying out their as the Equality and Diversity Officer.
2. Regularly collect information about the diversity of local communities and monitoring the impact of our work.
3. Identify and advise the CEO on any Islington Mind equal opportunities training needs and provision.
4. Ensure staff, service users' and volunteers' awareness and understanding of equal opportunities, equality and diversity issues and practice within Islington Mind via training and development.
5. Work together with the Service User Team Leader(s) to promote equal opportunities, equality and diversity, by arranging workshops, training and discussion sessions with service users.
6. Lead on Islington Mind's sharing of best practice on services for people with Protected Characteristics and/or hard to reach groups.

The Equal Opportunities Officer will be available in an advisory capacity in the case of a grievance involving equal opportunities issues.

The Equal Opportunities Officer should not represent particular views, opinions or interests of individuals or groups, nor have the authority within this role to discipline either staff or service users, or raise a grievance on behalf of a particular individual or group.

In the interests of operating an effective Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity Policy, Islington Mind will monitor certain information about job applicants. All such information will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff.

## **E. OTHER MIND POLICIES**

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Islington Mind policies e.g. Please refer to our Abuse, Harassment and Violence (service users) Policy and to our Harassment Of Employees Policy, Grievance Policy, Complaints Policy and Procedure, Safeguarding Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Accidents, Incidents Recording Policy, Serious Incidents Policy, Health and Safety Policy.