

Southern Derbyshire Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum (SDVSMHF)

Policy title	Equality and Diversity
Version number & issue date	04 October 2014
Audience	Executive Committee, employees, external contractors and members of SDVSMHF and job applicants during the recruitment process.
Definitions	<p>Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.</p> <p>Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for SDVSMHF.</p> <p>Equality and Diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued, harnessed and taken into account.</p>
Policy statement	<p>SDVSMHF is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. SDVSMHF aims to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, which recruits and retains a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves. Within this framework SDVSMHF specifically refers to measures it has in place to provide equality of opportunity and the facilities that it can provide to its diverse workforce and job applicants.</p> <p>SDVSMHF is committed to compliance with relevant equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and relevant best practice guidance. This policy pursues and builds on the statutory position to ensure effective policies and practice of promoting equality.</p> <p>SDVSMHF aims to pro-actively tackle discrimination or disadvantage and aims to ensure that no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated against for any reason with regard to employment or accessing its services.</p>

SDVSMHF is mindful of the provision in discrimination law for the rare circumstances when the organisation may need to justify its decisions. This could be, for instance, where there is a conflict with other legislation that SDVSMHF has to comply with or between service needs. In such circumstances SDVSMHF is committed to following the required proper assessment and objective justification of any decision in order to demonstrate that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

SDVSMHF is committed to ensuring:

that the existing Executive Committee, members of staff, external contractors, membership, job applicants, stakeholders and members of the public accessing its services are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination with regard to the protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act 2010 which are:

age; disability; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (includes colour, nationality and ethnic origins); religion and or belief; gender and gender reassignment; sexual orientation and economic disadvantage.

In addition, SDVSMHF is committed to ensuring:

that the Executive Committee, members of staff, external contractors, membership, job applicants, stakeholders and members of the public accessing its services are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination with regard to: caring responsibilities, part-time employment, membership or non-membership of a trade union or spent convictions.

that all employment-related policies, practices and procedures are applied impartially and objectively;

that equality of opportunity is extended to all whereby staff are provided with the opportunity to develop and realise their full potential;

that SDVSMHF works towards achieving a diverse workforce at all levels;

that employees of SDVSMHF can work in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

SDVSMHF will not tolerate processes, attitudes and behaviour that amounts to direct discrimination, associative discrimination, discrimination by perception indirect discrimination including harassment (harassment by a third party), victimisation and

	<p>bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping.</p> <p>SDVSMHF recognises the importance of monitoring, reviewing and reporting on its equality and diversity policy and practice and to measuring progress in meeting our policy statement.</p>
Related policies and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and Diversity procedure • Recruitment policy • Complaints Policy • Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure • Staff Handbook
Financial issues	None
Policy owner	Executive Committee
Original issue date	March 2004
Review date & comments	October 2017 or sooner if legislation changes