



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Oaks Meadow Project CIO

1. Introduction

1.1. Oaks Meadow Project (OMP) strives for high standards as a provider of services. In so doing, we recognise the need for, and strongly encourage diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our activities and responsibilities.

1.2. The aims and objectives of this policy will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. OMP will inform those we collaborate and work with of this policy and procedures document.

1.3. OMP is committed to reviewing this policy on an annual basis. We will also regularly examine the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and procedures. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

1.4. OMP urges trustees, volunteers, stakeholders and service users to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals.

2. Diversity and Inclusion

2.1. OMP encourages everyone it collaborates and works with to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

2.2. OMP, through its Mission Statement and Aims and Objectives supports the spirit and intentions of legislation that makes discrimination unlawful and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion.

2.3. OMP will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises where reasonably practical, and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees and volunteers to ensure they are able to take a full part in the organisation's activities.

2.4. OMP will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

2.5. OMP will continuously strive to create a culture where differences are not merely accepted but valued and where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with, and adheres to, OMP's values. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to what we do and our successes.

3. Equal Opportunities

3.1. OMP promotes equality of opportunity through all of its activities.

3.2. No volunteer, trustee, or service user should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. OMP also strives to include all characteristics of an individual that are above those required by law.

4. Aims & Objectives

- 4.1. To encourage, promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion in all of OMP's activities and services.
- 4.2. To ensure equal access to services, and volunteer opportunities.
- 4.3. To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality (including the Equality Act 2010 and any other legislation which becomes law).
- 4.4. To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation.
- 4.5. To create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.
- 4.6. To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to OMP's activities.
- 4.7. To make a willingness to abide by and implement this Policy a necessary condition of volunteering or collaborating with OMP.
- 4.8. To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all of OMP's premises and services are accessible to everyone.

5. Policy Implementation – Expectations

- 5.1. OMP recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and encourage diversity. Consequently, OMP will seek to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the following framework of responsibilities.
- 5.2. Responsibility for implementing and developing this Policy rests with the Trustees. However, OMP believes that all who collaborate or volunteer with or for it have an individual responsibility: to abide by the Policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that a fair and equitable environment is a reality.

Therefore, OMP requires individuals:

- 5.2.1. to implement measures introduced by OMP to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination.
 - 5.2.2. not to harass, victimise, abuse or intimidate any other volunteer or service user on the grounds of a protected characteristic as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (see Appendix) or any individual characteristics that is above those required by law.
 - 5.2.3. to inform the Trustees immediately if they suspect discrimination is taking place.
- 5.3. OMP requires its Trustees:
 - 5.3.1. to ensure that individuals who they supervise are aware of their legal responsibilities, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and procedures

5.3.2. to promote actively the benefits of diversity and inclusion for volunteers and service users.

6. Policy Implementation – Representation

6.1. In line with the intentions of this Policy, OMP strives to ensure that trustees, and volunteers reflect the wider community.

7. Policy Implementation – Training

7.1. In line with the intentions of this policy, OMP will not discriminate in the provision of training courses and learning opportunities wherever possible.

7.2. Appropriate training will be provided to enable trustees and volunteers to perform their roles effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all individuals.

7.3. A briefing on this policy will form part of the induction procedure for trustees and volunteers.

7.4. OMP will strive to ensure that all training and learning opportunities offered will be accessible to all individuals.

8. Policy Implementation – Enforcement

8.1. OMP recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion within the organisation. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how it operates in practice.

8.2. Any volunteer who feels aggrieved as a result of discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the Trustees.

8.3. Any volunteer or service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to this Policy should register a complaint with the Trustees.

8.4. OMP will take all grievances and complaints received seriously and will follow a full and fair procedure to investigate any and all such grievances or complaints.

8.5. OMP takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow volunteers, service users, suppliers, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's activities. Any volunteer suspected of being in breach of this policy will be subject to a full investigation by the Trustees.

8.6. Any volunteer, including trustees, found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave OMP.

8.7. Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be refused future services from OMP.

9. Policy Implementation – Monitoring

9.1. Where appropriate, statistics on its services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters.

9.2. All aspects of policies and procedures shall be kept under review to ensure that they do not operate against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Adopted:

Date 12.05.21

Signature (Chair) *D G Shelley*

Signature (Secretary) *N Cleaver*

Reviewed:

Date 08.11.23

Signature (Chair) *D G Shelley*

Signature (Secretary) *S Green*

Reviewed:

Date 11.12.25

Signature (Chair) *D G Shelley*

Signature (Secretary) *D Lambert*

Appendix. Definitions

The Equality Act (2010) describes nine “protected characteristics”.

Discrimination - a situation where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of:

- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- gender
- marital and civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- age
- physical, sensory or learning disability
- gender reassignment
- religion and belief (including lack of belief)
- pregnancy and maternity.

In addition to the nine “protected characteristics”, the Organisation would not discriminate against people, because of:

- mental health
- caring responsibilities
- class
- HIV status
- employment status
- unrelated criminal convictions
- union activities.

Associated Discrimination is direct discrimination against a person because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Perception is direct discrimination against a person because it is perceived that they possess a particular protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination is the imposition of a requirement or condition, which has disproportionate and / or adverse effect e.g. only recruiting people with English qualifications.

Victimisation means subjecting a person to detrimental treatment because they are or are believed to be bringing proceedings under the Equality Act; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Equality Act or making an allegation that a person has contravened the Equality Act.

A person must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals or being subjected to a detrimental effect.

Harassment means unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Harassment by a third party means unwanted, repeated conduct by a third party based on a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for a person and where the employer does nothing to prevent it from reoccurring. A third party is defined in law as not being the employer or employees of the employer, but people such as customers or clients.