



## **Swindon Advocacy Movement**

### **Equality and Diversity Policy**

Swindon Advocacy Movement is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, volunteers and clients eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our employees and volunteers to be truly representative of all sections of society and our clients, and for each employee, volunteer or client to feel respected and able to give their best.

Equality and Diversity is central to all daily work at Swindon Advocacy Movement. We aim to prevent and remove unfair and unlawful discrimination, harassment and exclusion wherever we encounter it in our work, to promote equality of opportunity in all that we do, and to value and respect differences.

### **Our policy's purpose**

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all employees (whether temporary, part-time or full-time), volunteers and clients
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage or civil partnership
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy
- leave for parents
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

Swindon Advocacy Movement may decide to use the 'Positive Action' clause of the Equality Act 2010, which allows for the setting up of courses specifically for a certain group, such as people with a learning disability.

### **Our commitments**

The organisation commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and throughout all advocacy services.
2. Create an advocacy service free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff, volunteers and clients are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees, volunteers and clients about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Responsibilities include staff and volunteers conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment and service delivery.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients and other professions we work with

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, volunteers who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation. All staff members and volunteers at Swindon Advocacy movement will receive regular supervision to minimise the risk of discrimination or prejudice's developing towards a particular group of people.

5. Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

6. Review employment practices and procedures, changes in legislation impacting our client group when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

Take an active interest in current national and local issues that may have a negative impact on the individuals we work with.

7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce (including volunteers) and client group regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

## **Access**

Employees, volunteers and clients are made aware of the existence of this policy and where it can be accessed. It is also available in Easy Read. Swindon Advocacy Movement takes seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination. This policy is reviewed annually.

Swindon Advocacy Movement will ensure that the services they provide are as accessible as possible to everyone and endeavour to positively encourage and benefit people from

disadvantaged groups:

- We will analyse Equal Opportunities data from individual referrals to inform and raise awareness of individuals or groups that are not using or being referred for our services.
- We will identify other organisations that are offering support and advice in order to make our service accessible for hard to reach groups.
- Supply specialist aids and facilities where possible to enable people with care and support needs e.g. community interpreters and a creative range of communication methods.
- Monitor any issues that arise and take appropriate action, fully supporting any person who is faced with prejudice or discrimination.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details found in Staff grievance policy and Disciplinary Policy.

### **Agreement to follow this policy**

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed by the board of Trustees and The Crew.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

Safeguarding policy

Disciplinary Policy

Exclusion Avoidance Policy

Ground rules

Guidance for staff dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Managing Allegations Policy

Policy on Unacceptable Actions by Clients and Exclusion Avoidance.

Recruitment policy

Staff grievance policy

Whistleblowing policy