

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Purpose

This policy pursues compliance with the Equality Act 2010 to promote and protect the equality of opportunity afforded to Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum's (HNF) users, employees, potential employees and Board of Trustees.

This policy sets out the HNF intention to ensure that no service user, volunteer, applicant for employment, employee, former employee or Trustee is treated less favourably and as a result suffers direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment, discrimination by reason of association, discrimination by reason of perception or harassment by a third party.

We aim to ensure that all who wish to work in, or volunteer to help with, our charity should have an equal chance to do so. We aim to create effective partnerships within all parts of our community and provide services that are accessible and inclusive.

This policy is non-contractual in effect and does not form part of normal terms and conditions of employment. HNF reserves the right to change the terms of this policy from time to time and to introduce a replacement procedure as may be required.

2. Scope

This policy covers all service users, applicants for employment, employees, volunteers and Trustees of HNF all of whom must comply with its provisions. Visitors and independent or third-party contractors on HNF premises are also required to abide by the terms of this policy, and any instance of discriminatory conduct by any customer, supplier, partner agency, or other contact of HNF will also be subject to its provisions.

General Definitions

Discrimination is treating others less favourably because they belong to a protected characteristic.

Protected characteristics under the HNF Employment code include Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, skin colour and nationality), Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation.

Protected characteristics outside of the HNF employment code (i.e. users, service users and third parties) include Age, Disability, Sex (gender), Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief and Sexual orientation.

Any service user, applicant for employment or employee will be protected where the individual suffers Direct discrimination, Indirect discrimination, Victimisation, Harassment, Discrimination by reason of Association, Discrimination by reason of Perception, and third-party harassment.

HNF is committed to:

- Tackling social exclusion, inequality, discrimination, and disadvantage.
- Ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect, valuing all diversity.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity.
- Delivering services that are accessible, appropriate, and delivered fairly to all.
- Working together with the community to provide accessible and relevant service provision that responds to the local area.
- The mix of its employees, volunteers, and Trustees reflects, as far as possible, the broad mix of the population of its local community.
- Encouraging traditionally disadvantaged sections of the community to participate in policy decisions about and manage the services provided.
- Providing fair resource allocation
- For this policy to be successful, it is essential that everyone is committed to and involved in its delivery. HNF aims to work towards a just society free from discrimination, harassment, and prejudice. HNF aims to embed this in all its policies, procedures, day-to-day practices, and external relationships.

3. Responsibility for implementation

HNF seeks to comply with the terms of the Equality Act 2010, aiming to promote equality and diversity about its role as:

- An employer.
- A provider and a procurer of services

This policy applies to all service users, prospective employees, employees, third-party contractors and trustees of HNF. Responsibilities for implementation of the policy are as follows:

- The Coordinator is responsible for implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that service users, prospective employees, employees and HNF trustees know and support the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- All staff members will support implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy effectively.
- All service users, prospective employees, employees, third-party contractors, visitors and Trustees have a collective responsibility to promote equality and diversity and to behave by the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- All service users, external partners, third-party suppliers, contractors, individuals, groups, organisations and others who interact with HNF are aware of and respect HNF's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Parties external to HNF must have suitable arrangements in place in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 to secure HNF engagement. Such parties include suppliers, contractors, consultants, groups, external partners, organisations, and others interacting with HNF. The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that such external parties have the appropriate measures.

HNF implements this policy by:

Ensuring that adherence is a condition of paid employment in HNF.

This policy ensures that Trustees, members, volunteers, and users are made aware, understand, and willing to implement. All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of this policy during their induction.

Actively encouraging Trustees, staff, members and volunteers to participate in anti-discriminatory training and making time and resources available for such training.

Monitoring the services, publicity and events provided by HNF to ensure that they are accessible to all sections of the population and do not discriminate, and taking active steps to ensure that participation is representative, e.g. ensuring written communication is available in relevant languages, the premises are accessible for all.

Continuing to learn and adapt to ensure this policy is upheld. Any person who feels this policy has not been maintained can make a complaint, which will be dealt with in line with HNF's Complaints Procedure.

4. Breaches of the Policy

HNF will treat any reports or instances of a breach of this policy with the utmost gravity and will investigate thoroughly and invoke the disciplinary procedure if there are grounds to believe that such conduct is discovered. Employees who believe that any employee has been subject to treatment contrary to this policy should report the matter immediately to their line manager, who will take such action as necessary to prevent any unlawful treatment from continuing. Any instances of deliberate discriminatory conduct will likely lead to instant dismissal. Users, prospective employees, third-party contractors or visitors wishing to raise a concern in relation to this Policy should direct this to the Coordinator. Breaches of this Policy by users or prospective employees, third-party contractors or visitors will be investigated, and appropriate action taken.

5. Monitoring of the Policy

The Board of Trustees will receive an annual Equality and Diversity Report, which will detail progress in equality and diversity and the implementation of this Policy.

HNF may collect data to monitor this policy's effectiveness and prevent instances of discrimination.

Coronavirus and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion¹

COVID-19 does not discriminate, but it does impact people differently. HNF suggests a range of resources and guides to support employees while in lockdown or self-isolating:

- Queen Mary guidance and resources for the coronavirus
- Mental and physical wellbeing
- Combining working from home with caring responsibilities
- Further reading on coronavirus and equality issues

Queen Mary's guidance and resources for the coronavirus

The Queen Mary [Coronavirus Webpages](#) are the central place for information and policy regarding your rights during the coronavirus. For further help working from home, these pages on Connected are being continually updated.

Mental and Physical Wellbeing

This toolkit from Mind can help you plan and take care of your well-being and work planning during a lockdown or self-isolation.

Plan for staying at home or indoors

Take care of your mental health and wellbeing

Checklist: are you ready to stay at home?

Combining working from home with caring responsibilities

Parents with young children It is understood that while parents might, in theory, be set up for home working, the reality of being able to do so will be quite different. We also understand that many people will not want to use 'grandparent care' in the current circumstances. Please be reassured that looking after your children must come first and that it is understood that your work may be limited or put on hold until this outbreak has passed.

Those looking after vulnerable family or friends may also experience similar pressures as outlined above and should also be reassured that it is understood that your caring role may have to take precedence over working from home.

Working from home whilst caring for someone or home-schooling children during the lockdown will never be easy. We have put together a set of tips that may help you during this time:

Consider agreeing to a daily schedule if you share caring or childcare duties with a partner.

Try to be realistic about what you can achieve, and do not beat yourself up if you do not reach it.

It may help to work in chunks of time, alternating between that and your other duties.

If you can, getting some work done early in the morning when no one else is up can help you feel less stressed for the rest of the day.

It is okay for children to have more screen time during the lockdown - please be kind to yourself first and foremost, and don't guilt-trip yourself about how much time they spend on a screen.

Use technology, such as Zoom, to help kids keep in touch with their friends.

¹ <https://www.equallyours.org.uk/resources/the-equality-and-human-rights-impacts-of-covid-19/>