



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 HNF's 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 comply with 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 Equality Act are: 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.

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, or third party harassment.

HNF is committed to:

- Tackling social exclusion, inequality, discrimination, and disadvantage.
- Ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all.
- 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 the management of 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 in relation to its role as:

- An employer
- A community organisation
- 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 has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that service users, prospective employees, employees and HNF trustees are aware of and abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- All staff members will support the effective implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- All service users, prospective employees, employees, third party contractors, visitors and Trustees have a collective responsibility to promote equality and diversity and to behave in accordance with 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' Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Parties who are 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 who interact with HNF. The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that such external parties have the appropriate measures in place.

HNF implements this policy by:

- Ensuring that adherence is a condition of paid employment in HNF.
- Ensuring that Trustees, members, volunteers, and users are made aware, understand, and are willing to implement, this policy. All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of this policy as part of 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 is accessible for all.
- Continuing to learn and adapt to ensure this policy is upheld. Any person who feels that this policy has not been upheld 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 fully and invoke the disciplinary procedure if there are grounds to believe that any such conduct is discovered.

An employee who believes 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 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 relation to equality and diversity and the implementation of this Policy.

HNF may collect data to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and to prevent instances of discrimination from occurring.

APPENDIX I

Coronavirus and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The health, economic and social impacts of COVID-19 have been stark COVID-19 does not discriminate, but it does impact people differently. As well as increased morbidity and mortality, the economic consequences of the pandemic have been severe and are likely to be felt for years to come.

The health impacts in ethnically diverse deprived areas, including Harlesden, have been particularly adverse, with Harlesden Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) recording the highest level of deaths of any MSOA in England during the first wave of the pandemic. With unemployment and economic inactivity already higher in Harlesden than in many neighbouring areas, the economic impact of the pandemic may be particularly keenly felt.

HNF cannot deal with the multifaceted challenges of COVID-19 on its own, but it can make a contribution. It will do this by:

- Maintaining a list of COVID-19 resources on its home page for the duration of the pandemic, which will be reviewed monthly and whenever there are changes to restrictions or support programmes. This will include links to information about:
 - Current guidance on movement locally and travel
 - Health and COVID-19-related guidance from the UK Government and elsewhere
 - Financial support for individuals
 - Financial support for firms and the self-employed
 - Mental and physical wellbeing
 - Employment and employment support schemes
 - Local mutual aid groups
- Serving as a point of contact between the community of Harlesden and the local authority through, for example, seeking views on measures implemented by Brent Council to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission
- Maintaining a full programme of events. Events will need to be held online while the current conditions prevail. This by nature risks excluding some members of the community, but it is the best realistically available means of maintaining activity and dialogue
- Maintaining a regular newsletter, which provides a means of engaging Forum members who may be unable to attend online meetings