



Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity and anti-discrimination policy

Equal Opportunities

The **Equality Act** became law in October, 2010. It replaced previous **legislation** (such as the Race Relations **Act** 1976 and the Disability Discrimination **Act** 1995) and ensures consistency in what employers and employees need to do to make their workplaces a fair environment and comply with the law.

Nottinghamshire Mind is committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment and the services it provides. No user of our services, employee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment because of: - sex, colour, ethnic origin, age, race, disability or health condition, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other criterion not relevant.

As an employer and provider of a service to the community, Nottinghamshire Mind accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that no other service user, volunteer or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated in this policy.

Nottinghamshire Mind recognises that some clients and users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Nottinghamshire Mind's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Nottinghamshire Mind will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible an approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client. A record will be kept of such situations.

Responsibility-

The Board of Trustees of Nottinghamshire Mind has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all employees, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Nottinghamshire Mind to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

We will bring to the attention of all employees, job applicants, volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is

necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it. Reference to the policy should be included in contract documents with outside agencies.

Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work on Nottinghamshire Mind services are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Nottinghamshire Mind's Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as volunteers.

Positive Action-

Nottinghamshire Mind believes that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that positive steps shall be taken. Nottinghamshire Mind is committed to:

- recognising and developing potential which has not been used before because of past discrimination and disadvantage.
- encouraging access and applications from under-represented groups.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the services offered by Nottinghamshire Mind reflect the composition of the community it serves.

Dealing with Complaints-

If any service user, volunteer or employee feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter through Nottinghamshire Mind's complaints procedure.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

Recruitment-

Nottinghamshire Mind will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply sex or other stereotyping.

Nottinghamshire Mind will take positive steps to redress imbalances in its work force and application forms will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid.

Training Opportunities-

Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job or personal development. Training courses will be non-residential and in working hours whenever possible.

It is the responsibility of every individual member of staff to participate in equal opportunities training that is provided.

Working conditions-

Pregnancy - Nottinghamshire Mind recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will consider sympathetically any requests for such changes.

Antenatal Care - Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant employees to attend antenatal classes, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

Flexible Hours and Job Sharing - Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees with no qualifying length of service, to facilitate caring for children and other dependants. Requests for job sharing or part-time working to meet employees' needs for shorter hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

Accessible Buildings - Nottinghamshire Mind will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all its premises are fully accessible. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

Use of Language - Staff, volunteers and service users will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles;

- disabled groups and/or individuals with special needs
- any race, culture or religion
- a person's sexual orientation
- women and/or men
- a person's age

Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

All materials used or developed by Nottinghamshire Mind will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

Sexual Harassment-

No member of staff, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse
- physical contact
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user, volunteer or employee who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

Monitoring of Policy -

The reason for having an Equal Opportunities Officer is to advise, inform and consult with management, staff and service users in order to progress and improve equal opportunities within Nottinghamshire Mind. The person appointed to this role should be committed to progressing equal opportunities within Nottinghamshire Mind in a positive manner. The Equal Opportunities Officer will be the CEO and they will-

Monitor and report on Nottinghamshire Mind's equal opportunities progress, development and practice at trustee meetings to report to the Board of Trustees.

Ensure staff, service users' and volunteers' awareness and understanding of equal opportunities issues and practice within Nottinghamshire Mind via training and development.

Advise and consult with Nottinghamshire Mind's Board of Trustees on equal opportunities to recommend and discuss courses of action.

Know or have access to appropriate information, legislation, policy, etc. for the purposes of carrying out their role.

Identify and advise on any equal opportunities training needs and provision.

It is not intended that the Equal Opportunities Officer should represent particular views, opinions or interests of individuals or groups, nor have the authority within this role to discipline either staff or service users, or raise a grievance on behalf of a particular individual or group.

The Equal Opportunities Officer will be available in an advisory capacity in the case of a grievance involving equal opportunities issues.

Equality and Diversity-

Nottinghamshire Mind values diversity, and is determined to provide equality of opportunity in all of its activities, both as an employer and a service provider and recognizes that in order to achieve this it may be necessary to treat people differently according to individual circumstances. This applies to Nottinghamshire Mind dealings with staff and service users, volunteers and third parties' organizations.

Nottinghamshire Mind is committed to providing a working environment free from intimidating or humiliating behaviour, eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its own policies, practices and procedures and in those areas in which it has influence.

Nottinghamshire Mind seeks to ensure that:

All individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

That the opportunities and services provided are open to all.

That there is a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for staff, volunteers and service users.

That every person and every employee who receives, or is affected by Nottinghamshire Mind activities and services should perceive their experience to be fair and equitable.

Anti – Discrimination-

To discriminate is to treat a person more or less favourably on the basis of race, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, culture, gender, marital, parental or property status, disability, age, sexuality, or other such category that is irrelevant to the individual's right to receive fair and equal treatment. It is generally recognised that discrimination can occur in many ways.

Direct discrimination; where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origins, sex, pregnancy, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief.

Indirect discrimination; where an apparently neutral provision or practice would put a substantially higher proportion of the members of a particular group (such as sex, racial or ethnic origin, disability etc) at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons unless that provision, or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

Victimisation; where someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against the organization.

Harassment; when unwanted conduct related to any of the grounds referred to above takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment may involve physical acts or verbal and non-verbal communications and gestures.

As an employer-

Nottinghamshire Mind will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not discriminate unjustifiably against them. This will include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, work allocation and any other employment related activities.

Nottinghamshire Mind recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take positive action to ensure that:

It recruits from the widest pool of appropriate candidates.

Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit.

Positive action measures are taken to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are underrepresented in the workforce.

Selection criteria and processes do not discriminate; other than in those instances where the firm is exercising permitted positive action.

Wherever appropriate and necessary, lawful exemptions (genuine occupational requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups.

Nottinghamshire Mind will use eligibility criteria which are fair to everyone whilst being supportive of our business goals. We will do this by regularly reviewing company procedures and documents including job descriptions, job advertisements, employment agency instructions and application forms.

Nottinghamshire Mind will treat all employees fairly and create a working environment which is free from discrimination and harassment

and which respects, where appropriate, the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of employees.

Terms and conditions of service for employees will comply with antidiscrimination legislation. The provision of benefits such as working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress code, bonus schemes and any other conditions of employment will not discriminate against any employee on the grounds of their gender; marital status; race; racial group; colour; ethnic or national origin; nationality; religion or belief; or sexual orientation; or unreasonably on the grounds of their disability.

Where appropriate and necessary, Nottinghamshire Mind will provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which take into account the specific needs of employees which arise from their ethnic or cultural background; gender; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief; or sexual orientation.

Training and Development-

Nottinghamshire Mind will support the training and development of employees to fulfil organisational need and to help realise their full potential. We will ensure opportunities for training and development are made equally available to all employees, basing decisions on qualification, experience and potential of the employee.

Implementing the Policy-

The ultimate responsibility for implementing this policy rests with Trustees of Nottinghamshire Mind. They will appoint the CEO to be responsible for the operation of the policy.

During induction, all employees and volunteers will be notified of this policy and expected to adhere to it and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their jobs or representing the organisation.

Acts of discrimination or harassment on any grounds by employees or volunteers may result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated in a similar fashion. The policy applies to all employees, volunteers and trustees.

Complaints of discrimination-

Nottinghamshire Mind will treat seriously all complaints of discrimination. Complaints can be grounds for disciplinary action that may include dismissal.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with Nottinghamshire Mind's complaints procedure.