



Policy: Equality and Diversity and Human Rights Policy

Date agreed by Governance Board: Aug 2017

Review Date: August 20

Equality and Diversity

The purpose of this policy is to provide diversity and equality at Brighton and Hove Speak Out to all in employment and services, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status and social class. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

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1. Policy Statement



Equality of opportunity and diversity have been long-standing features of our employment practices and procedures. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable. We also recognise that discrimination runs through all aspects of life and aim to challenge it, not ignore or condone it.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that no board member, stakeholder, job applicant, employee, service user or volunteer is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, gender reassignment, sexuality, social status, religious belief, disability regardless of impairment/condition or mental health issue or age.

It is an accepted fact that many of the issues which relate to and impact upon the progress and advancement of diversity are related to employment practice and service provision.

Speak Out will use its position and authority to assist in trying to overcome structural obstacles to diversity such as open access to the service, advice and guidance, signposting, promoting opportunities and support to increase opportunities for those currently under-represented groups.

A copy of this policy will be made available for all board members/Trustees, employees, volunteers and service users and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account and consideration will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice which support best practice.

Speak Out will challenge discrimination and discriminatory practices within its own organisation, member groups and the community. We will:

- Ensure we promote and protect the Human Rights of staff, service users and volunteers
- Strive to create conditions that make it impossible for discrimination to operate.
- At all times, examine, criticise and change any structure that perpetuates discrimination.
- Take disciplinary action against anyone in the organisation that make discriminatory statements, remarks or jokes.
- Where informed, we will strive to meet the reasonable adjustment needs of staff, volunteers and service users
- Maintain a neutral working environment in which no service users, employee, worker or volunteer feels under threat or intimidated.



Acceptance of this policy is a condition of employment by Speak Out and a condition of membership of the Governance Board.

2. Service Provision, Employment and Volunteering

As a Disabled Persons' Organisation serving the learning disabled community, Speak Out's overall aim is to further the human rights of disabled people and work within the ethos of the social model of disability.

Speak Out therefore strives to ensure that its services, events, building, information provision and staff and volunteering support are accessible to all.

The social model of disability requires that the barriers or elements of social organisation that exclude disabled people should be identified and removed. Examples of such barriers include:

- Inflexible organisational procedures and practices;
- Inaccessible information;
- Inaccessible buildings;
- Inaccessible transport;
- Discriminatory health and social support services.

Access to Information and services

Our services are fully accessible through one to one visits, group meetings and activities that take place in our fully accessible meeting room.

We will ensure that all our information, letter and email communication is provided in point 14 Arial minimum and/or supply information in larger print for those that require it. We will ensure that all relevant documents have an easy read summary.

Speak Out has signed up to the 'Inclusive Communication Charter' and will ensure that a range of communications aids (e.g. pictures, talking mats etc.) are available to services users who would find them helpful.

We have a range of information available from other organisations, we endeavour to ensure it's accessibility but cannot always guarantee it. On request from the client however we will contact the organisation and request the information in an accessible format and remind them of their duties under the Equalities Act.



We offer a person centred service and offer one to one support if necessary. If someone has a visual impairment we will read all the information back to them after completion.

An Interpreter, for those whom English is not their first language, or for hearing impaired clients, can be arranged with notice.

Accessible, picture supported directions to our offices/ venue are available on request.

Support to volunteers

We endeavour to offer individual person centred flexible support to our volunteers to enable them to be part of the organisation and fulfil the duties of their allocated role. If a volunteer needs specific support to carry out their duties he/she will be mentored until they feel comfortable and appropriate access support is in place.

Volunteers will be allocated their preferred role, if appropriate, i.e. if they have the necessary skills and if all access needs can be met. If this is not possible they will be allocated another role within the organisation or signposted to another organisation. Support is offered through the Volunteering Co-ordinator to ensure the placement is appropriate and accessible.

We endeavour to support volunteers with their transport requirements; travel expenses can be claimed, including the costs of taxis in certain circumstances.

Meetings and Public Events

All our meetings are held in accessible venues and we endeavour to meet everyone's access needs.

Meetings and events will be held in an accessible venue with level access or a ramp with clear signage, accessible toilet facilities and with a hearing loop. We will ask people to inform us of their access requirements before an event or meeting. If they do not respond we may not be able to put everything in place.

The dates for meetings are always given as far in advance as possible with formal invitations, asking about access needs, sent out 4 weeks in advance. Events will have appropriate signage in large print and easy read (picture supported).

We will endeavour to make sure that the information, i.e. agendas, minutes or reports are understood by all. (large print, picture supported, easy read if appropriate, on tape). If requested a BSL interpreter will also be arranged.

For consultation events a range of creative methods may also be used.



Service User Involvement

Speak out is committed to involving service users throughout the organisation; as Governance Board members and as paid employees, sessional workers, volunteers, as well as on project steering groups.

Appropriate support will be provided for services users in these roles which may include:

- Mentoring from a volunteer or another Board Member
- Information, agendas, meetings notes etc to be in an accessible format. Other documents to have an accessible summary as necessary
- Support to prepare for meetings and debrief afterwards
- Meetings will be made accessible (including Governance Board and steering group meetings and staff meetings when necessary) – See Speak Out’s full guidelines for making information and meetings accessible.

3. Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities and diversity policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

We will have a clear and transparent competence based system for defining job roles (see Staff and Volunteer Recruitment policy).

All job descriptions will be in line with, and support our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any person specifications.

We will strive by recruitment and selection, to redress any imbalances in our staffing in terms of gender, disability, ethnic origin, age and sexuality in so far as is possible within the law and within the community that we operate.

Speak Out will be able to show that neither direct nor indirect discrimination took place during the recruitment of staff. If Speak Out has members of staff that are being made redundant or if there is a likelihood of redundancy those staff will be considered for any new positions, which match their skills if available at that time.

Before advertising any job vacancy a full job description and personal specification will be drawn up. These will identify the requirements of the job and the qualities and skills that are essential



and those, which are desirable. The specification, the application form, and the job advertisement will be reviewed to ensure that they do not include non-essential qualifications or experience.

Advertisements and details sent out to job applicants will include the following statement: "Brighton and Hove Speak Out is an Equal Opportunities employer and we welcome applications from all sections of the community but in particular from disabled people."

All job applicants will be asked to complete a monitoring form. The form will include the following explanation of the need for monitoring:

"Any organisation can simply state that it does not discriminate – this does not make it a reality. Monitoring is essential if we are to discover and eliminate discrimination in our services."

Members of the shortlisting/interview panel will be drawn from Speak Out's Governance Board. They will have the power to co-opt other appropriate members. Board members will be inducted in equality and diversity and recruitment practices.

Anyone who considers that they have been discriminated against in the selection procedure will have the right of appeal to the Governance board.

We will make reasonable adjustments to the various stages of the recruitment and selection process as well as within employment as needed. On request we will offer recruitment information in alternative formats, i.e. large prints, audio, CD Rom. We will also receive application forms via alternative methods.

Shortlisted candidates will be offered the chance to have a reasonable adjustment/s at interview to ensure that they have an equal chance during the interview process, i.e. BSL interpreter, large print, accessible interview room, support or personal assistance.

New employees will be offered Access to Work to enable them to fulfil the duties on their role.

4. Training

Speak Out acknowledges the importance of diversity training as a key factor in the implementation of an effective Equal Opportunities Policy.

Provision will be made for staff and Governance Board members to receive equality and diversity training through local training networks. This will be included in staff, volunteer and Board member induction.



5. Conditions of Service (Staff handbook)

The Governance board will review and develop the conditions of service in the staff handbook regularly, according to agreed policy review schedule, to ensure that they are not discriminatory.

It is a condition of service that Governance Board and employees adhere to the Equality and Diversity Policy. Failure to do so may result in complaints and disciplinary measures being taken.

6. Employee's Responsibilities

Co-operation between staff and Management is essential to a successful Equal and Diversity Policy and staff will be consulted on all aspects of the policy and its implementation when the policy is reviewed biannually.

Employees will:

- Not discriminate against colleagues or services users.
- Abide by the Speak Out's Diversity Statement of Intent.
- Challenge racism and discrimination from all other staff, volunteers and service users and provide an account of any incidents.
- Attend diversity training, disability equality and other equal opportunities training as and when required.
- Work to identify ways in which this policy can be made increasingly effective and to identify areas of service delivery based on need.
- Participate in monitoring of service delivery and implementing the organisations Equal Opportunities Action plan.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Speak Out recognises that acceptance of an Equal Opportunity Policy is not an end in itself. It is the effective implementation and development of the policy that matters. This cannot be achieved without monitoring.

Speak Out, through the Governance Board, Managers and other staff is responsible for carrying out monitoring and evaluation of all functions of the organisation including recruitment policy and service delivery.



Speak Out will use monitoring forms agreed in line with partnership arrangements (see appendix 1). An accessible version will be used with services users. All data will be stored in the database in line with Speak Outs Data Protection policy.

8. Service Provision

Speak Out recognises that a statement saying that any individual regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief, marital status or disability are welcome to use the service is not enough.

In order for services to be relevant and accessible to all groups, positive measures need to be taken to counter institutional discrimination. These measures include the following resources:

- Speak Out will endeavour to ensure that its premises are accessible to everyone regardless of impairment/condition.
- Interpreters/signers/readers will be made available, by arrangement, to those who need them. Efforts will be made to ensure that no one is excluded from participating in activities.

9. Developing Good Practice

Training will be provided on issues relating to equal opportunities for staff, volunteers and Governance Board members.

Support mechanisms will be established to help staff, Governance Board members and volunteers to confront prejudice if or when it arises in work situations.



Speak Out Equal Opportunities Form

Please use this form to help us gather equalities information about our services. You are not obliged to fill this in, but it helps us to ensure that our services are open to everyone in the city and that we treat people fairly and appropriately.

Please tick or circle the following. This information will be stored confidentially and securely on our database. It is collated anonymously and used in monitoring reports for funders and for us to review which groups in the city are involved in our organisation. We will only use it to make our services better.

Your name:		
What age are you? <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	
What gender are you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please state <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	
Do you identify as the gender you were assigned at birth?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	
How would you describe your ethnic origin?		
White <input type="checkbox"/> English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy <input type="checkbox"/> Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese <input type="checkbox"/> Sudanese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background (please give details) Other Ethnic Group <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please give details) <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	Black or Black British <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Sudanese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black background (please give details) Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Asian & White <input type="checkbox"/> Asian & Black African <input type="checkbox"/> Asian & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Black African & White <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean & White <input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed background (please give details)	Asian or Asian British <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background (please give details) After you have ticked a box: If there is an ethnic category that is not included here that you think should be, please tell us what it is:



What is your religion or belief?									
<input type="checkbox"/> I have no particular religion <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> Christian <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu <input type="checkbox"/> Jain <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/> Pagan <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh <input type="checkbox"/> Agnostic <input type="checkbox"/> Atheist <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)								
<input type="checkbox"/> Other philosophical belief (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say									
Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes a little <input type="checkbox"/> Yes a lot <input type="checkbox"/> No (Do not answer the next question) <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say (Do not answer the next question)								
If you answered 'yes', please state the type of impairment. If you have more than one please indicate all that apply. If none apply, please mark 'other' and write an answer in.									
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disability/Difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Long-standing Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Condition <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Condition									
Are you a carer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say								
If yes, do you care for a.....?	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Child with special needs <input type="checkbox"/> Other family member <input type="checkbox"/> Partner / spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)								
Are you:									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • currently serving in the UK Armed Forces? • a veteran/ex-serviceman or woman of the UK Armed Forces? • a member of a serviceman or woman's immediate family? • a reservist or in part time service (eg: Territorial Army)? 	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No								
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No								
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No								
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No								



Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual/ Straight
- Lesbian/ Gay woman
- Gay man
- Bisexual
- Other (please state)
- Prefer not to say