



Equality and Diversity Policy

Approved by Board: June 26th 2018

Lead Officer - CEO

Introduction

This policy should be read alongside PDT's recruitment and selection policy which ensures we adopt an equal opportunities policy in our recruitment practice. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that PDT strives for high standards both as an employer and as a provider of services. This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for PDT, (including trustees, staff, volunteers and service users) to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation

PDT aims to create an organisation which promotes equality and is free from discrimination and harassment, where all staff, service users, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders can fulfil their personal and professional potential in an environment of fairness, dignity and respect.

At PDT we will not discriminate against staff we employ, or those seeking employment, as well as service users, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders with us on the grounds of:

Race/ethnicity

Nationality

Gender

Gender Reassignment

Sexual orientation

Pregnancy and Maternity status, HIV status, mental health issues or other health issues

Marital or Civil partnership status

Religion or Belief

Disability

Age

Ex-offenders

Class

Caring responsibilities

Employment status

Union membership

or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

PDT will ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses are disability friendly. PDT acknowledges that at present, many community premises are not totally disability friendly. It is PDT's aim to improve this when considering new premises, and effort will be made to ensure such premises are suitable for those with disabilities. In the meantime, every effort will be made, as far as is reasonable practicable, to accommodate those with disabilities and where possible reasonable adjustments will be made.

We will also endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals and our partners.

This document sets out our policy for equality and diversity in more detail.

Policy Statement

PDT is committed to valuing diversity in all areas of our work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives and that diversity will make our organisation more effective.

The overall aims of this policy are to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination

Ensure that we treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respect.

Operate a culture of inclusiveness, tolerance and respect

To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises

Promote equality of opportunity

Promote equality of access

Meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010

Scope

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term staff, volunteers, contractors (whether employed or self-employed), consultants, agency staff, job applicants and trustees and we will encourage partner organisations to adopt similar policies.

Responsible Person

The CEO is responsible for communicating and implementing this policy.

PDT's Recruitment and Selection Policy sets out in detail how the organisation will recruit in line with best practise to avoid discrimination.

Promotion and Training

Promotions will be based on ability and potential and all staff or volunteers, who meet the criteria for the post, will be considered equally, objectively and without prejudice.

Managers or other staff responsible for appraising employees, volunteers, and contractors/consultants will be trained in the avoidance of discriminatory and biased assessment. All staff, trustees, stakeholders, and volunteers will be trained on the application of the Equality and Diversity policy.

PDT encourages all staff, volunteers and contractors to undertake further development opportunities relevant to their post. Opportunities to attend training courses will be provided to all staff, volunteers and contractors on an equal basis in accordance with the individual development needs that have been identified and agreed with the Manager.

Where employees want to reduce their hours because of personal or family reasons PDT will seek to accommodate them. Job sharers and part time workers will be treated equally to full time employees in relation to training and promotion and we will seek to organise staff meetings and communications around their needs.

In the event of an employee, volunteer and contractor/consultant becoming disabled either through injury or illness every effort will be made to continue to employ that individual, either in the same or an equally suitable position if at all possible. Arrangements for re-training the employee will be made where necessary.

Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for trustees, staff, volunteers and committee members

Cultural and Religious Needs

PDT recognises that some staff, trustees, service users, volunteers and stakeholders may have particular cultural or religious needs (for example, the need to observe prayer time and other religious rites, special dietary requirements or the need to wear specific clothing). Whenever it is reasonably practicable, PDT will endeavour to facilitate these needs to be met.

Where staff have particular cultural and religious needs that may conflict with work requirements, PDT will positively consider whether it is reasonably practical to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met subject to operational contingencies.

Pay

PDT will ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the job evaluation of posts is objective and free from biased assessment or prejudice.

Bullying and Harassment

PDT has a duty of care to all staff, service users, trustees, stakeholders, and volunteers and is committed to providing a safe working environment free from all forms of bullying and harassment. It requires all staff, volunteers and trustees to inform management if they are aware of any bullying or harassment taking place.

Redundancy (see PDT's Redundancy Policy)

Selection for redundancies will be conducted in a manner that avoids any discrimination and any selection criteria will be objective and free from biased assessment or prejudice.

Evaluation and Monitoring of equal opportunity employment practices

At least every other year, the CEO will also provide reports to the Board of Trustees on the gender and ethnic groups applying for and being selected for posts advertised externally and internally and the diversity of existing staff and volunteers and the reasons for staff leaving.

The effectiveness of this policy and any training undertaken should be reviewed and reported to the Executive Committee of the Trustees every two years.

Service Users

PDT will not discriminate against service users on the grounds of:

Race/ethnicity

Nationality

Gender
Gender Reassignment
Sexual orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity
Marital or Civil partnership status
HIV status, mental health or other health issues
Religion or Belief
Disability
Age
Ex-offenders
Class
Caring responsibilities
Employment status
Union membership

As an employer and provider of services to the community PDT accepts the responsibility to promote equality and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This includes challenging service users who are behaving inappropriately with regard to practising equality and valuing diversity.

Evaluation and Monitoring of Equal Opportunities Service Delivery

PDT regards the collection/analysis of data as vital in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on the PDT's services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters. Local and national data or statistics will be used to benchmark our performance.

The Trustees will review annually equality of opportunity relating to the PDT's services. If appropriate positive action will be taken to encourage wider take up of services.

Complaints

Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Grievance Procedure and any claims of inequality will be thoroughly investigated.

Any volunteer or contractor/consultant who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should do so in writing to the Deputy CEO who will be responsible for investigating the complaint. The Deputy CEO will be responsible for replying to any complaint in writing in line with PDT's Complaints Policy. If the complainant is still not satisfied the matter should be referred to the CEO or Chair of Trustees.

Any complaints by service users about discriminatory behaviour by staff, volunteers and/or contractors/consultants will be thoroughly investigated.

Responsibility

All Managers and staff should make themselves familiar with this policy and undergo training from time to time – at least every 3 years.

All volunteers and contractor/consultants and partner organisations should be made aware of this policy on commencing work with PDT.

Equality Act 2010

This act harmonised existing discrimination legislation into a single act. Protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation. Prohibited conduct includes direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, and discrimination arising from a disability, harassment, victimisation and failure to make reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate a person's disability. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and marriage and civil partnership. Employees are able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them. Third party harassment applies to gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Third party can also apply to people not employed by PDT. Victimisation applies when an employee is treated badly because they have made a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act.

Definitions

Equal Opportunities ensures that policies, procedures and practice within PDT do not discriminate against its employees, volunteers and stakeholders. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of whom they are, their background or their lifestyle.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to PDT and to the community. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative.

Direct Discrimination, as defined in law, occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably than other people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

PDT also seeks to promote equal opportunities in terms of class, HIV status, nationality, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions or union activities, political, mental health or caring responsibilities.

Discrimination by association - applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic (race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex).

Discrimination by Perception – direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular characteristic of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice puts people of a particular group at a disadvantage and is not justified in relation to the job, for example a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified.

Harassment means unwanted conduct based on a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association

Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees, or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures could take the form of additional training or providing the job application form in other languages to encourage applicants from these communities.

Protected characteristics - The Equality Act 2010 covers exactly the same groups of individuals that were protected by the previous legislation. However, the headings of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity are now to be known as '**protected characteristics**'.

Victimisation means that if a person has made or is making an accusation of discrimination in good faith, it is unlawful to discriminate against them for having done so, or because they intend to do so or it is suspected that they intend to do so. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.