

Stirling and District Women's Aid's Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

1.1. Stirling and District Women's Aid (SDWA) will endeavour through our policies, procedures, actions and decision-making to ensure that no employee, volunteer or service user receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious or political belief, age or social background. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and equal opportunity in all our work.

2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1. SDWA recognises that certain sections of the community have been affected by past discrimination and may be denied the opportunity to participate equally and fully in society at all levels.

2.2. This policy has been produced to prevent/tackle any potential/current discrimination or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, against its employees, members and volunteers.

3. Actions

3.1. SDWA will mainstream equality and diversity through its business plan and its delivery to ensure the intent of this policy is delivered.

3.2. All areas of the organisation will be affected by this policy, which will be incorporated into the overall business delivery plan, itself reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

3.3. SDWA recognises that, in some cases, to achieve the principles of equality and diversity, unequal effort is required and, if appropriate, will consider positive action to tackle under-representation.

4. Legal Requirements

Additional to the intent set out within this policy, SDWA recognises its obligations in relation to the Equality Act 2010.

5. Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation terms explained

Discrimination can take the following forms:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of particular characteristics such as sex or gender, gender reassignment, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, disability, age, religious or philosophical belief (or the lack of such belief), sexual orientation. Direct discrimination may also involve situations where reliance on a formally neutral criterion affects one group only, even if that was not the intention.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to an individual or group that would put persons of a particular characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons. In British law, indirect discrimination can occur on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, nationality or ethnic background, religion or belief, sex/gender or sexual orientation. It does not apply to pregnancy or maternity, but provisions which place pregnant women or new mothers at a disadvantage would be considered to be indirect discrimination on grounds of sex.

Discrimination based on perception or association

People are protected from discrimination if they are assumed to have a protected characteristic (even if the assumption is incorrect) or if they associate with someone who has it (if, for example, they are a carer for an older person, or they are the partner of a transgender person). This protection now extends to all characteristics.

Discrimination arising from disability

When a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified, this is unlawful. This type of discrimination only relates to disability.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or which creates an intimidating or hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Under the Equality Act 2010, harassment does not apply to sexual orientation or religion or belief, but actions which may be construed as harassment on these grounds would be likely to be considered indirect discrimination.

Victimisation

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because he or she has made allegations or brought proceedings under the anti-discrimination legislation, or because they have helped another person to do so. To do so would constitute victimisation.

6. Responsibility, Implementation and Communication

The following responsibilities will apply:

- 6.1. The SDWA Board is responsible for promoting the principles of Equality and Diversity in the work of SDWA.
- 6.2. The Manager has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 6.3. All employees, volunteers and service users have responsibilities to respect, act in accordance with and thereby support and promote the spirit and intentions of the policy and, where appropriate, individual work programmes will include equality related tasks.
- 6.4. The Equality and Diversity Policy will be implemented immediately following Board agreement and, at a corporate level, will result in the following:
- 6.5. A copy of this document will be available to all employees, service users and volunteers
- 6.6. SDWA will take measures to ensure that its employment practices are non-discriminatory.
- 6.7. No job applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute unfair discrimination.
- 6.8. A planned approach will be adopted to eliminate barriers which discriminate.
- 6.9. Ensure that consultants and advisers used by SDWA abide by this policy.
- 6.10. It will be covered in all staff and volunteer induction training.
- 6.11. It will be available on the SDWA Website.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 7.1. Once approved, the policy will apply for 3 years before a formal review takes place, unless any proposal to the Board, or legislation change, requires an interim review and/or amendment.
- 7.2. Equality actions as outlined in the business plan will be reviewed by the Manager, on a six-monthly basis.
- 7.3. Monitoring on equality and diversity will be mainstreamed into the regular reporting.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

7.4. The principles of equality outlined in this policy sit within the wider ethical framework as delineated in SDWA policies and Code of Conduct.

7.5. In accordance with the SDWA policies any employee, volunteer or service user who believes he/she has suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this policy may raise the matter through the SDWA Complaints Procedures.

Reviewed by Board of Trustees 2021

To be reviewed 2024