



The Big Step

Equality and Diversity Policy

Version: 1.0

The equality and diversity policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in light of any new significant development.

Reviewed yearly by:	
Manager of 'The Big Step'	Dan Leverton
Date:	30th October 2018
Review date:	30th October 2019

Policy history:			
Version update	Summary of change	Date of change	Amended version No
n/a new policy			

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1 Introduction

'The Big Step' is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work, and we value the rich social and cultural diversity of our communities. We understand that the people who provide and use our services have diverse characteristics and different experiences, needs and aspirations. We promote Anti Oppressive Practice and recognise that people face exclusion,

discrimination and harassment as a result of any one or more aspects or perceived aspects of their identity, or by association with people with different characteristics.

Our Legal Duties

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unlawful discrimination in the provision of services and public functions, employment, premises, education and associations (e.g. membership clubs). Some people are more likely than others to experience discrimination.

Protected characteristics

These are characteristics that make people more likely to face discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Under the Equalities Act it is illegal to discriminate against, harass or victimise people because of:

- Age
- Gender identity and reassignment
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or having a child
- Disability (with Carers protected 'by association')
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In particular, it is unlawful to exclude people from membership of a group or from using services because of their protected characteristic.

Under the Equality Act 2010 Local Authorities are bound by a Public Sector Equality Duty to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life)
- Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding)

Public authorities are also legally responsible for complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty in procurement and commissioning activities and the authority remains responsible for functions being carried out by external providers such as Space. As such we welcome and recognize Devon County Councils Equality Policy and their strategy "Fair for All 2015 -20"

Many young people come to us because they have experienced discrimination and disadvantage. We have the power to reduce some of those disadvantages by making our practices and services responsive to community and individual needs. We welcome our legal duties and will use the legislation and national guidance as a framework to improve or maintain standards and be accountable to our service users. However, we are not only driven by legislation - our policy and strategies are also in response to local needs. In providing services, employment, governance and monitoring, we will actively promote equality and inclusiveness for all of our service users and staff and challenge discrimination and exclusion. We will make sure that our services, workforce and governing body reflect the diversity of our local communities and that all of those with whom we work are aware of our commitment to equality and diversity.

2 Policy Statement

Definition of Equality and Diversity

- Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation
- Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions, which is beneficial for the individual and their communities
- Equality and Diversity are not interchangeable but interdependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued, harnessed and taken account of

We believe that equality is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfill their potential. We also believe that diversity is a means to achieve our organisation's ambitions and is about service delivery, outreach and inclusion. This will be reflected in the people we employ and involve in our work. Our Equality and Diversity Policy underpins all our other policies and procedures.

We will:

- Eliminate barriers to service delivery and employment and ensure that our service users and staff feel that they have been fairly treated with dignity and respect
- Promote equality of access and make any reasonable adjustments
- Develop and deliver our services in order to help people achieve their full potential
- Promote equality and inclusiveness in all aspects of our business. It is the responsibility of all of our Board members, staff and contractors working on our behalf to adhere to and implement this policy
- Promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of an individual's employment including their terms and conditions
- Ensure that all potential employees can expect our recruitment processes to be free of all unreasonable barriers
- Integrate our values into our work
- Provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment - for staff, contractors, volunteers and service users
- Treat harassment, including extension to third party harassment seriously

3 Why we have a Policy

Legislation protects people from discrimination in the following situations:

- At work
- In education
- As a consumer
- When using public services
- When buying or renting property

As a member or guest of a private club or association the Equality Act 2010 legally protects you from discrimination. You're also protected from discrimination if:

- You're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, e.g. a family member or friend

- You've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's complaint

'The Big Step' holds to the principle of anti-discriminatory practice and is proactive in challenging all forms of discrimination and oppression. We are open to all individuals and groups including those experiencing or at risk of experiencing exclusion or discrimination and believe in extending anti-discriminatory practice beyond statutory requirements to provide access to youth work opportunities for all young people regardless of their circumstances.

We welcome and recognise the Devon County Council "Fair for All 2015 -20" strategy. We understand our reach is limited and therefore our provision is neither necessarily equitable nor similar across the county. The design, delivery and development of our services are tailored to locally assessed need and funding opportunities. Participation by young people, partnerships with the voluntary sectors and other key partners, identified need and resources all inform our programmes at any particular time.

We will however through all aspects of our work seek to advance equality and celebrate diversity, eliminate discrimination where we find it, and challenge and support young people to explore issues of equality. At the same time we will inform partners and others on the issues affecting young people and work to foster good relations and respect between groups and communities.

4 Who it affects

Responsibility

All employees have a responsibility to guard against any form of discrimination and avoid any action which goes against the spirit of this policy. Employees and volunteers must ensure that there is no discrimination in any of their decisions or behaviour. This includes the provision that all staff must:

- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity
- Not victimise anyone as a result of them having complained about, reported or provided evidence of discrimination
- Not harass, abuse or intimidate others

However, whilst all staff have a collective responsibility to ensure this policy is successfully implemented, there are also specific responsibilities within this.

The Board, Chief Executive and the Executive Team are responsible for:

- Providing leadership on the equality and diversity strategy and policy, acting as overall champions to ensure the policy is implemented
- Communicating the strategy and policy, internally and externally
- Strategic engagement with and accountability to the funders and the public

Managers at all levels are responsible for:

- Implementing the policy as part of their day-to day management of staff and in applying employment policies and practices in a fair and equitable way
- Ensuring equality and diversity issues are addressed in performance
- Ensuring all staff act in accordance with the equality and diversity policy providing necessary support and direction

- Effectively manage and deal promptly when investigating issues relating to potential discrimination, including those matters concerning members of the general public
- Ensuring all policy or service decisions that will change provisions, practices or policies and affect the workforce are Equality Impact Assessed as required. For further information refer to the Equality Impact Assessment policy

Each employee is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy in their day-to-day work and their dealings with colleagues, service users and visitors
- Ensuring their behaviour is appropriate to the policy and that they treat people with respect and dignity
- Not discriminating against other employees or service users
- Notifying their line manager of any concerns with regard to the conduct of other employees, service users, the public or third parties

Non- Compliance with Policy

'The Big Step' will not tolerate any behaviour that breaches this equality and diversity policy. Any such breaches will be regarded as misconduct except for serious offences such as discrimination on protected grounds; serious offences including harassment, bullying, or victimisation will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action including dismissal from employment without notice.

5 How it is implemented

Implementing the policy

We will make our Equality and Diversity Policy fully effective by:

- Actively promoting it
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing all our job selection procedures and criteria and change them if they result in unfair discrimination
- Making sure that all employees and job applicants, contractors and volunteers know about this policy
- Taking appropriate action, using agreed procedures, if any employee breaches this policy
- Providing training and guidance, particularly for line managers, to make sure that they understand this policy and their legal responsibilities
- Linking this policy with our Anti Oppressive Practice training
- Monitoring recruitment and employment statistics to identify under-representation, as well as monitoring and impact assessing

Equality and diversity at work

We are committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and demonstrating that we value the diversity of our workforce. In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policies, procedures and practices, we will:

- Do our best not to unfairly discriminate against any job applicant or employee and, when recruiting, only consider factors which are relevant to someone's ability to perform the job well
- Aim to create a workforce that is as diverse as the community we serve
- Do our best to treat all employees and job applicants fairly in relation to all our employment policies and procedures and to meet any reasonable and appropriate additional needs they may have

- Value and respect the identities and cultures of our staff, including volunteers
- Do everything we can to work towards a workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment and will act promptly on any complaints of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimization
- Provide a safe working environment
- Make the workplace, and information about work, as accessible as we can for all our employees
- Give our employees clear information about job selection and training and encourage all employees to reach their full potential
- Make sure that we work according to the relevant employment legislation and statutory codes of practice
- Continue to develop good practice employment policies and procedures over and above those required by legislation
- Apply this Equality and Diversity Policy through the organisation's recruitment and selection process, training programmes, grievance procedures and all other employment policies
- Do all we can to give employees and job applicants access to complaints procedures if they feel unfairly treated

Commitment to users

Service users and potential service users can expect Space to aim to:

- Design and deliver appropriate, accessible and effective provision through the development of meaningful relationships, by delivering reliable, creative and well timed services
- Work in partnership with others to promote equality and diversity
- Make sure that we provide services that comply with relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice
- Continue developing good practice policies and procedures over and above those required by legislation
- Act promptly if we receive any complaints about the way we provide services

6 How it is monitored

- The Head teacher will review this Policy annually and report to the board to ensure it continues to be effective and responsive to any new relevant legislation
- Equality impact assessments will be carried out when appropriate
- Amendments to the Policy will be made in the light of experience or changes in guidance and/or legislation
- All aspects of personnel policies and procedures will be kept under constant review in order to identify the effectiveness of policy implementation
- An audit will be carried out annually in the form of a staff survey to establish the composition of the workforce