

## **Equality and Diversity policy**

### **Statement of intent**

Spring North recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

Spring North will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

Spring North aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences. Spring North sees these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve.

All volunteers, employees, directors and member organisations must declare their support for the objectives of this Equality and Diversity policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and/or ineligibility for membership.

### **Context and Legislation**

As an employer and service provider, Spring North is required to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. It is also firmly within our ethos and values as an organisation to ensure that all staff and volunteers, service users, members and commissioners and stakeholders are confident that we treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect.

The Equality Act 2010 is a consolidating act introduced to bring together the various threads of discrimination under one statute. The Act defines 9 protected characteristics

- Age
- Disability
- Gender assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The policy also reflects our commitment to the Human Rights Act 1998, the extension of the law on harassment and the Equality and Human Rights Commissions' Codes of Practice for Employment, Equal Pay and Services, Public Functions and Associations

## 1. What is discrimination?

**Direct discrimination** is treating one person less favourably than another in the same or similar circumstances or segregating them from others solely because they are, for example, a lesbian, a gay man or because they have a disability or illness. Refusing to employ someone who has the required skills because they are deaf or because they are pregnant would constitute such discrimination.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where there is a requirement or condition which applies equally to everyone but which, in practice, has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified. For example an unnecessary physical or age requirement can discriminate against women or disabled people. The setting of language tests, where language skills or fluency are not really needed for a job, is another example.

**Abuse and/or harassment** – Discrimination also covers actions which amount to abuse and/or harassment of people or groups of people because for example they are a member of a national, racial or ethnic minority group, a woman, a lesbian, a gay man or have a disability or illness.

**Victimisation** occurs when a person is treated less favourably or is discriminated against because she/he has pursued or intends to pursue their rights in respect of alleged discrimination.

### **Institutional racism (Macpherson Report, 1999)**

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in the processes or attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination, to unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.

### **Racist incident (Macpherson Report, 1999)**

Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. If the victim doesn't want to complain, another person may do so.

Discrimination in any of the forms stated above is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

## 2. Staff development

Learning and development opportunities will be made available to staff in order for them to develop their potential and understanding

## 3. Service provision

- All services are covered by this policy.
- Spring North will promote equality and diversity in its work with other agencies or individuals.
- Any contractual workers/trainers will be required to support our Equality and diversity policy.

## 4. Recruitment and selection

Spring North believes that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment because of the reasons given in the Statement of intent.

Staff appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination is occurring at the point of selection.

## **5. Miscellaneous**

- **Office accommodation**

Spring North will make every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community.

- **Purchasing**

Spring North reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

- **Promotion of policy**

Copies of this policy will be freely available to staff, volunteers, members and any other interested parties.

- **Travel**

Spring North recognises that not everyone has access to personal transport or is able to use it and will plan its services and activities with this in mind.

## **6. Implementation and monitoring**

Monitoring of the Equality and diversity policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the directors.

The directors will review the policy annually.

Induction for new directors and new staff will include a briefing on the Equality and Diversity policy.

A copy of the Equality and Diversity policy will be given to all new staff, directors, new members of Spring North and to any member on request.

Training will be provided for employees, directors and volunteers on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that will develop from equality and diversity

## **7. Directors**

All directors will affirm their commitment to the Equality and diversity policy

The directors (including non-exec directors) should aim to reflect a fair balance and representation of the local community and should endeavour to redress any imbalance of under-represented groups.

## **8. Our policies and procedures**

Spring North's other policies support our commitment to equality and diversity and underline the importance of equality and diversity in all contractual and partnership arrangements.



**Signature:**

**Date: 15/11/23**

**Review date: 14/11/24**