

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy Aims:

- To ensure that the organisation displays commitment to promoting diversity through all aspects of its services and employment;
- To emphasise the benefits gained from valuing differences between people;
- To ensure the organisation promotes equal opportunities for all, irrespective of colour, race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital/civil partnership status, sexuality, disability, age, or any other combination of protected characteristic;
- To ensure the company reflects the diversity of the UK and to making its services accessible to all;
- To ensure the organisation creates and sustains an inclusive work environment and culture which provides equity of opportunity for everyone;
- To ensure that each employee feels safe, valued and part of a team, regardless of the aforementioned differences.

2. Example of Relevant Legislation:

- EU Anti-Discrimination Directives (which currently include the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Religion and Belief Regulation 2003 and Sexual Orientation Regulation 2003)
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1970 and Amendment 1983
- Equality Act 2010

3. The Social Model of Disability:

At Kingfisher Treasure Seekers we base our practice on The Social Model of Disability and focus on reducing or removing the barriers people with disabilities face. We recognise people with disabilities as full, valued and included members of our communities with the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else.

4. Policy Guidance:

Employment

Kingfisher Treasure Seekers believes that regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, employment hours, disability, cultural, ethnic or religious beliefs; every employee should have the opportunity to develop, and work in a safe and supportive working environment. Kingfisher Treasure Seekers is committed to being an equal opportunities employer, and to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to be part of a team and to feel valued and included.

Throughout the services the company provides, Kingfisher Treasure Seekers intends to ensure equal opportunities for all. At each stage of employment whether paid or voluntary, staff will be included in the provision of a non-discriminatory service, which will seek to make each individual employee and service user aware of diversity.

During the staff recruitment and selection process, procedures and practices are reviewed regularly to ensure that neither direct nor indirect discrimination should occur. All staff involved in interviewing and selection procedures will be given training to help avoid discriminatory practices. To further ensure this, every effort will be made to ensure there is more than one member of the management team present; where this is not possible video may be used, or alternatively a sequence of meetings with various members of management. Kingfisher Treasure Seekers will endeavour to treat applicants equally regardless of the characteristics stated in paragraph 1. This non-discriminatory approach will continue throughout employment.

Service Users

Individuals wishing to use the service will not be discriminated against or receive less favourable consideration on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, language ability, literacy, cultural or religious beliefs or any other protected characteristic.

Kingfisher Treasure Seekers recognises the use of registered assistance dogs for staff and service users. An Assistance Dog is one which has been specifically trained to assist a person with a specific disability and which has been qualified by one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK):

*Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
Dogs for the Disabled*

All Assistance Dogs will have formal identification and have been granted certification by the Department of Health on the basis that the dog's high standards of training, behaviour, health and welfare are such that it should be permitted to accompany its owner at all times and in all places within the United Kingdom. Owners are not required to prove any certification when attending public places and it may be considered discriminatory to ask.

Guide Dogs assist people who are blind or are visually impaired. They usually wear a white working harness with yellow reflectors and tags on their collar.

Hearing Dogs assist people who are deaf or are hearing impaired. A Hearing Dog communicates by touching its owner then indicating the source of the sound. The dog will alert its owner to a variety of sounds including door bell, smoke alarm, baby alarm, and alarm clock. Staff should be aware that Hearing Dogs may jump up onto their companion if telephones or alarms sound. They usually wear a burgundy coloured coat with "Hearing Dog" written on the coat.

A Guide Dog with a red and white harness indicates the owner is deafblind.

Assistance Dogs, Support Dogs or Dogs for the Disabled assist people with many different tasks ranging from alerting people when their owner has a seizure, carrying items, loading and unloading washing machines and many other tasks. They wear a purple coloured coat.

Assistance Dogs are highly trained certified animals and distinguishable from pets in the following ways:

- *Wearing a special harness and collar tag.*
- *Are carefully taught how to be well behaved in public places.*
- *Will sit or lie quietly on the floor next to its owner.*
- *Are trained to go to the toilet on command.*

Assistance Dogs are exempt from usual hygiene rules by the Institute of Environmental Health Officers. Any assistance dog attending public places within our services seen to not display the behaviour as above will be considered to be inadequately trained and may be asked to leave.

Bullying and Harassment

Kingfisher Treasure Seekers recognises that discrimination can take one or more of the forms set out below;

Harassment - is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the person's

dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation - occurs when a person is punished or treated differently because they have pursued or intends to pursue their rights in respect of alleged discrimination. Both the person making the complaint and their representative /colleague are protected in this case.

Kingfisher Treasure Seekers recognises that discrimination in any of the forms stated above is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Treasure Seekers will challenge all forms of discrimination within its service users, staff, volunteers and management structure and will actively take steps to combat all direct or indirect discrimination within any aspect of the organisation.

Responsibility

Every staff member and volunteer has a responsibility to ensure that Treasure Seekers is an inclusive organisation which protects and promotes the rights of all. Treasure Seekers expects everyone to be proactive in the consideration, discussion, planning and delivery of services which are fair, non-discriminatory and represent the diverse range of people in Gloucestershire. If discrimination is suspected, it is each staff members' responsibility to tackle this, by informing the company manager immediately. (In these instances, staff should also be aware of the organisation's 'Whistleblowing Policy'.)

The Directors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that Treasure Seekers operates in an equality focussed way. They have overall responsibility to see that the policy is adhered to throughout the year and reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

Handling Incidents of Discrimination

Where possible, Kingfisher Treasure Seekers advocates a relational approach. The employee should make the harasser aware that their behaviour is inappropriate, and inform them of how they are feeling. If an employee requires support they may seek it from any of the following people:

- Gill Parkinson
- Jan Burn
- Craig Tucker
- Andy Davis

If the employee does not feel comfortable taking the above step verbally, they may put it in writing to the harasser.

Where these steps do not work, or where the harassment is considered severe, the employee should make a formal complaint. The employee should put in writing the nature of the harassment with any relevant details including dates and times, the name of the harasser and any witnesses. The employee should also state any steps they have already taken to prevent harassment. The complaint should then be presented to Andy Davis or, if the complaint is against Andy, to Craig Tucker or Gill Parkinson. This is specific to colleague to colleague bullying and harassment and as such varies in process to usual complaints, which go straight to Craig Tucker.

Training and support

This policy is introduced to all staff and Directors as part of their induction, assigned to them on the Atlas portal. It is also displayed on the organisation's website to access when required. All staff will receive support, supervision and line management, which should be carried out with due regard to equal opportunities. All staff will be given access to appropriate training opportunities via Atlas including making reasonable adjustments to enable access to training.

Service provision

All those seeking to access Kingfisher Treasure Seekers services will be treated equally and will not be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements. This applies to all aspects of receiving services, including application, referral, support planning and risk management.

Where relevant, we will consult with representatives of relevant areas of the community to ensure that services are inclusive and meet the specific needs of all groups. In all its publicity and information materials, we will endeavor to:

- avoid jargon and use clear, direct language.
- use positive images of a wide range of groups.
- reach all sections of the community by advertising in a wide range of appropriate publications and locations.
- produce materials in a variety of formats and languages wherever possible.

Monitoring and evaluation

Kingfisher Treasure Seekers sets targets and monitors the effectiveness of equal opportunities objectives within the organisation by collecting and evaluating data annually. The information gained will be used to consider the effectiveness of policies and practices in achieving the target and plan for future services. Monitoring information collected will include the following areas:

- Numbers and outcomes of referrals for services

- Overall profile of staff, trustees and volunteers including age, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality and disability.
- Complaints

Evaluation of the monitoring information will include consideration of the following:

- Whether there is fair representation of people from all groups in the community (excepting sex and as relevant to age)
- Level of service user satisfaction
- Reputation of the organisation in the wider community and in the experiences of other professionals where possible
- Comparison of performance against targets.