

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY



THE ARTHUR ELLIS
MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION



Purpose

At AEMHF, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all clients, staff, parents and carers receiving services from us, irrespective of race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, religion and belief, or socio-economic background.

We will also endeavour to provide accessible premises or make reasonable adaptations to allow access to our services.

We do not want to exclude any individual and will work with them to support access to our services where possible.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to AEMHF are proud of this.

Scope

This policy covers all clients, staff, volunteers and other agencies that we come into contact with, through our work both face to face and online.

Procedures

We will monitor applications and service provided by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to ensure that we are not discriminating against any group and are enabling all who need our services to access them fairly.

We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

Equality into Policy and Practice

As well as the specific objectives set out beneath this information; we operate equality of opportunity in our day-to-day practice in the following ways.

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Staff Team

We recruit mainly based on qualifications, skills and experience, but also try to employ staff who represent the diversity of the community.

We aim to provide all our clients with the opportunity to improve their mental health, and to reach a point where they are able to understand and manage day to day life, incorporating strategies and a network of support to enable this to happen.

To do this, we will:

·Use individual plans to provide support to individuals.

- Monitor access data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps.
- Ensure equality of access for all potential clients and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist, sexist, and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice.
- Appreciate the variety of cultures and celebrate and promote the diversity of those cultures.
- Encourage children to seek to involve their parents/carers in their support and therapy, where appropriate.
- Encourage staff discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on mental health.

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Accepting Clients and Exclusions

Our referrals arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

We endeavour to connect the client with the most appropriate mental health mentor (mentor), based on their needs. Our system allows potential clients to choose the mentor with the appropriate skills and experience that match their requirements.

We will not prevent clients from accessing our services unless we are unable to provide the right support, the impact of mentoring is causing further concerns, or the behaviour of the client makes working with them impossible to do safely and puts client or mentor at risk.

Equal Opportunities for Staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the service reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer Duties

As an employer we need to eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating clients.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention, including bullying and harassment of staff.
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff.
- Providing communication on different mediums and adapting to specific reasonable requests.
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

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Equality and the Law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met, in line with legislation from the Disability Equality Duty (2005) and the Equality Act (2010).

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a client or prospective client by treating them less favourably on the basis of a 'protected characteristic.'

The protected characteristics are:

- Sex.
- Race.
- Disability.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Care experienced child.
- Married or in a civil partnership.

A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and in regard to the provision for goods and services.

Having due regard in this context means that when any significant decisions are being taken by AEMHF, thought must be given to the equality implications.

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty, requiring us to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people.
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

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Equality and the Law Cont.

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male and between women and men and transgender people.

We will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment.
- Promote equality between men and women.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation.

Milton Keynes also includes care leavers as a protected characteristic.

Consultation and Involvement

We shape our policies by actively seeking input from trustees, staff, service users and agencies we work with. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the information and objectives:

- Feedback from client, and discussion in staff and trustee meetings.
- Input from staff survey.
- Feedback from individual staff during supervision.
- Feedback at Trustees meetings.

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Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Trustees:

- The Trustees have set out their commitment to equal opportunities in this document and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that AEMHF is fully inclusive to clients, and responsive to their needs based on the protected characteristics.
- Trustees seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs on the grounds of the protected characteristics.
- Trustees take all reasonable steps to ensure that the environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make communications as inclusive as possible for clients and parent/carers.
- Trustees welcome all applications to access services, whatever their socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- Trustees ensures that no client is discriminated against whilst receiving a service from AEMHF on account of their race, sex or disability, gender, religion and belief or the fact that they are pregnant or are undergoing gender reassignment.

The role of the CEO:

- To implement the equality objectives and be supported by the Trustees in doing so.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the equality objectives, and that staff apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Communicates information in a variety of ways and adapted to individuals needs when required.
- To ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to the equality information and objectives, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- Promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the service and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all activities.
- Treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff (mentoring support):

- All staff will ensure that all clients are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the equality information and objectives.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the DSL or CEO.
- Mentors support the work of other staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against discriminatory incidents.

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Tackling Discrimination

Harassment or victimisation on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy is unacceptable and is not tolerated within AEMHF.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to clients' individual circumstances.

Staff and Trustees should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

What is a Discriminatory Incident

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person” Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a prohibited act”) in connection with the Act. For example, making an allegation of discrimination.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender.
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia.
- Sharing discriminatory material.
- Verbal abuse and threats.
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim’s race, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion.
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups.
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

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Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to clients and staff how they report incidents. AEMHF's procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:

- Incident to be reported to DSL or CEO.
- DSL or CEO to investigate further (if incident reported) or challenge behaviour immediately.
- Incident and actions to be recorded on client records on our secure system.
- Consider referral to LADO if it meets the harm criteria.
- Response to victim and family.
- Response to perpetrator and family.
- Incident to be updated on secure system with outcomes.
- Incidents involving suspensions / exclusions to be reported to Trustees.
- Report on outcomes.
- Implement any changes recommended.

Review of Progress and Impact

Our Trustees have agreed the equality objectives. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our equality objectives annually and review the entire information and objectives on a four-year cycle. As part of this process, we regularly monitor access and exit by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all clients are making the best possible progress and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

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