

St Helens Mind

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Reviewer		

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Section 1: Purpose

1.1 Introduction

'We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.'
Mind Strategy 2021-2024.

1.1.1 St Helens Mind seeks to create safe and welcoming services that are accessible and meaningful to all in our communities, reflecting their diverse experiences and needs. We believe that St Helens Mind is strengthened and enriched by diversity throughout the organisation.

1.1.2 We are an anti-racist organisation.

1.1.3 We are committed to providing equal opportunities and using equitable practices, both in employment and access to services, and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work.

1.1.4 We know that discrimination including bullying and harassment negatively impacts people's mental health. We recognise that we have a responsibility to equality, diversity, and inclusion beyond the Equality Act 2010.

1.1.5 This policy, along with the **EDI Implementation Plan** outlines the rights of people who interact with our organisation, our responsibilities and provides a framework for St Helens Mind's commitment and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

1.2 The Equality Act

1.2.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination – i.e., treating people differently based on a particular aspect of their identity – in the workplace and wider society.

1.2.2 The Act defines these as 'protected characteristics'. They are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

1.2.3 St Helens Mind recognises that discrimination exists in other areas, and believes that discrimination on grounds of mental health, gender identity, or socio-economic and housing status, although not legally defined, are to be considered by everyone interacting with St Helens Mind.

1.2.4 Any discrimination based on the legal protected characteristics or characteristics identified at St Helens Mind will not be tolerated. This includes direct discrimination (including discrimination by perception or association), indirect discrimination, and harassment.

1.2.5 St Helens Mind will make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services for people with disabilities. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation, or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for people to make use of services. St Helens Mind strives to go beyond this duty, and endeavours to ensure services are accessible for all who may face barriers with measures such as offering online services, flexible appointment times, providing funding for travel, or hiring translators or interpreters.

1.2.6 St Helens Mind believes that an intersectional approach is vital to providing the right support for everyone and is committed to working in a person-centred way.

1.2.7 St Helens Mind has created an **EDI Implementation plan** to monitor and report on the effectiveness of this policy and the organisation's EDI practices.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Equality – means treating everyone the same way, regardless of their differences.

1.3.2 Equity – recognises that everyone has different circumstances and need different resources and opportunities to succeed.

1.3.3 Diversity – acknowledging, respecting, and valuing our differences, recognising that everyone is unique and that nobody is a stereotype.

1.3.4 Inclusion – creating an environment where everyone is truly respected, valued and made to feel safe to fully participate in opportunities at St Helens Mind. Empowering people to make their own decisions rather than be 'done to'.

1.3.5 Direct discrimination - treating someone unfavourably because they:

- have a protected characteristic
- Are thought to have a protected characteristic (known as discrimination by perception)
- Are connected to someone with a protected characteristic (known as discrimination by association)

1.3.6 Indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.

1.3.7 Harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

1.3.8 Victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've raised a complaint or

grievance about discrimination or harassment in relation to a protected characteristic. For example, being denied a training opportunity or a promotion.

1.3.9 Positive action - enabling or encouraging people who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.

1.3.10 Intersectionality: acknowledging that our identities and experiences are all unique. Recognising that there may be several aspects of someone's identity that could lead them to experiencing discrimination, and that we should not overlook one aspect in favour of another or assume that people who share a characteristic need the same type of support.

1.3.11 Reasonable adjustments – changes to a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by a person with a protected characteristic.

1.4 Scope

1.4.1 This policy applies to anyone interacting with St Helens Mind including staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, service users and the public. It is everyone's responsibility to constructively challenge the discriminatory behaviour of others, and to reflect on their own biases to develop an anti-discriminatory and inclusive environment.

1.4.2 We expect our partners to adopt similar principles and will not enter into or remain in partnership with any organisation that does not share our values and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

1.5 Roles and responsibilities

The following section details the responsibilities of specific individuals and groups involved in compliance with this document.

1.5.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring effective governance and quality assurance in connection with this policy.
- Supporting a culture where everyone feels safe and welcome.
- Undertaking EDI training, including unconscious bias training.
- Holding St Helens Mind accountable, reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy via the **EDI Implementation Plan**.

1.5.2 The CEO and senior leadership team are responsible for:

- Developing a culture where everyone is encouraged to challenge discrimination and promote equitable practices.
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers have read and understood this policy.
- Undertaking and providing appropriate EDI training to all staff, volunteers and trustees, including unconscious bias training.

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are given protected time within working hours to engage with, and equitable access to learning and development opportunities.
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers and trustees are effectively supported at work, and that necessary modifications and reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers to equity.
- Reviewing this policy annually to ensure its effectiveness, or sooner to reflect any legislative changes.
- Monitoring and effectively managing the impact of the organisation's EDI practices via the **EDI Implementation Plan**.

1.5.3 Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Reading and understanding this policy.
- Embracing an inclusive culture, treating everyone with dignity and respect reflective of their diverse needs.
- Engaging in training opportunities with a commitment to developing their understanding of the impact of discrimination.
- Challenging discrimination directly where it is safe to do so, raising it with their line manager or via the Whistleblowing policy where appropriate.
- Cooperating with the EDI lead regarding any actions as outlined in the **EDI Implementation Plan**.

1.5.4 The EDI Lead are responsible for:

- Informing and supporting staff and volunteers of the standards expected of them.
- Developing resources for service users plus external communications materials to raise awareness with the public.
- Carrying out regular reviews of the **EDI Implementation Plan** and reporting findings to the SLT and Board of Trustees.

Section 2: Targets and strategies

2.1 Fair employment and volunteering practices

Target: St Helens Mind is committed to ensuring fair employment and volunteering practices from the point of recruitment and throughout employment/volunteering.

Strategies:

2.1.1 Recruitment:

- Job and volunteer advertisements will state St Helens Mind's commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and will target as wide an audience as possible.

- We use clear skills-based selection procedures to ensure appointments are made on individual merit and ability as outlined in the person specification.
- Identifying information is removed from all applications prior to shortlisting.
- We will seek to put together diverse recruitment panels and ensure that at least one member of any recruitment panel is trained in equal opportunities selection and unconscious bias.
- St Helens Mind takes positive action where and when appropriate to encourage applications from different parts of the community. For example, we will look to make sure that recruitment campaigns reach out to as diverse an audience as possible. Full government guidance on positive action can be found here - [Positive action in the workplace](#). Hiring managers will be trained on positive action to ensure it is carried out lawfully.
- Copies of St Helens Mind's EDI Policy will be circulated to any agencies undertaking recruitment on our behalf and we will ensure they understand and adhere to it when recruiting and acting on our behalf.

2.1.2 Professional development

- All staff, volunteers and trustees will receive EDI training including unconscious bias training as part of induction, plus refresher training at regular intervals.
- Hiring managers will be required to undertake additional training on equal opportunities in recruitment.
- All staff and volunteers will have equal access to professional development opportunities. Staff have dedicated budgets for personal development outside of their mandatory and role-specific training. To ensure equity, people from under-represented groups may receive additional development opportunities should St Helens Mind be made aware of any barriers to development.

2.1.3 Employment and volunteering

- St Helens Mind has a code of conduct which includes the values and behaviours expected of all employees and volunteers and outlines our zero-tolerance policy toward discrimination.
- Our complaints, grievance and whistleblowing policies outline our response to allegations of discrimination.
- St Helens Mind allow staff to join forums for people with specific protected characteristics to provide peer support and to feedback to the EDI Lead to influence practices.
- We will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of our standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, core working hours and working location, when considering requests for variations to them. St Helens Mind will refuse such requests only if necessary to ensure effective delivery of the role.

2.2 Service delivery

Target: St Helens Mind will ensure that the services provided are relevant and accessible to all sectors of the community it serves.

Strategies:

- We will make a public commitment to EDI on our website; promote campaigns and attend events relating to diverse causes; and celebrate diversity on social media.
- Promotional materials will promote diverse images, and resources will be made available in ways that are accessible where possible e.g. different languages, larger font, audio etc.
- We will undertake **Equality Impact Assessments** to consider the potential for any particular group to be disadvantaged during the planning and preparation of new services or changes to current services.
- We will actively engage with under-represented communities to build links and work with organisations who are already connected with or led by communities.
- Action will be taken to ensure that premises and facilities give adequate access to people with disabilities or those with other specific needs.
- We will endeavour to remove barriers to access with initiatives such as providing flexible appointments, a digital offer for services, sourcing translators and interpreters, and funding for travel.
- We will ensure that our services are delivered in a person-centred way, understanding people's history, background, experiences, and culture.
- We will look for opportunities to develop services that reach out to people who may feel excluded, in particular those from under-represented groups.

2.3 Working with others

Target: To work with others to eliminate stigma, discrimination and disadvantage and to promote justice.

Strategies: Links with partner organisations will be formed and maintained to:

- Advance St Helens Mind's understanding of the needs of other groups who have specific needs or face discrimination.
- Work in partnership with other organisations to promote a positive culture of inclusion and to help increase our accessibility and responsiveness to under-represented groups.
- Promote and celebrate diversity to ensure people from all sections of society feel valued and safe to reach out when they need help.

2.4 Decision making

Target: Make diverse voices influential in decision making at St Helens Mind.

Strategies:

- We will seek to have diverse trustees and leaders within St Helens Mind by providing equity of opportunity to a diverse range of applicants.
- We will identify additional ways of ensuring a diverse range of people are influential in decision-making, such as a range of feedback mechanisms and focus groups.
- We will provide opportunities for staff and volunteers from across the organisation to review key policies and areas of practice, and to participate in recruitment panels.

Section 3: Monitoring and reporting

3.1 Monitoring

3.1.1 St Helens Mind collects and analyses the diversity data of service users to ensure that services are accessible to all, and to review provision where it is not.

3.1.2 St Helens Mind collects and analyses the diversity data of all applicants, staff, volunteers, and trustees to ensure it is accessible in employment, and to review recruitment and employment practices where it is not.

3.1.3 St Helens Mind utilises Equality Impact Assessments to ensure it provides equitable access to people from all sections of society and monitor where changes can be made to remove barriers.

3.1.4 St Helens Mind utilises supervision, appraisals and exit interviews to give staff and volunteers the opportunity to discuss their employment or volunteering experiences and make improvements to practices.

3.1.5 St Helens Mind regularly reviews complaints, compliments and comments to inform our EDI practices.

3.1.6 The EDI Lead will monitor the EDI Implementation plan at quarterly intervals.

3.2 Reporting

3.2.1 The EDI Lead will escalate any key issues or actions to the senior leadership team, including bi-annually in reports to the Board of Trustees.

3.2.2 St Helens Mind will produce an annual summary of its EDI work as part of the impact report for external use on the website for transparency and accountability.

3.3 Implementation

3.3.1 Staff, volunteers and trustees will be required to read and understand this policy as part of induction and refresher training.