

## **No: 11 Staying Put Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

Staying Put aims to be an equal opportunities employer and seeks to ensure that equal opportunities principles underpin all areas of its work and service provision.

Staying Put will take positive steps to redress discrimination.

This action will be over and above the requirements placed upon Staying Put by anti-discrimination legislation.

People may experience discrimination for many reasons including their race, colour, nationality, ethnicity and national origin, language, health and disability (physical or mental), HIV status, gender, caring responsibilities, pregnancy, religion or belief, marital status, sexuality/sexual orientation, age, trade union activity, where they live, how they speak and whether they work part time or otherwise flexibly.

In most cases it is unlawful to discriminate against people on grounds of gender, pregnancy, race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, or because they are disabled, married, a member of a trade union, work part time or on a fixed term contract.

However it is the aim of this organisation to combat any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reasons not directly related to their ability to do a job for this organisation or to their eligibility to receive services from us.

**STAYING PUT  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY  
MECHANISMS**

**1.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 1.1 Staying Put's Board has ultimate responsibility for the equal opportunities policy. However, it is the responsibility of the Manager and the management team to implement monitor and evaluate the equal opportunities policy and delivery. She is also under a duty to ensure that the Board is informed of the policy's implementation and the implications of the board decisions and policies for equal opportunities.

**2.0 STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

- 2.1 All employees and Board members will be informed that an equal opportunities policy is in operation and will be bound to comply with its requirements. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of funding agencies, job applicants and, where appropriate, clients.
- 2.2 The "Equal Opportunities Statement" above shall be displayed in our offices, visible to staff and visitors. Workers and Board members are to be given a copy of the whole policy upon appointment/election and whenever the policy is modified.
- 2.3 Staying Put will seek to keep abreast of developments in equal opportunities practice.
- 2.4 We will regularly provide training for paid and voluntary staff and Board members on equal opportunities issues. Equal opportunities issues and implications will be addressed in meetings.

**3.0 OBLIGATIONS OF STAFF**

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to treat each other with respect, to avoid discriminatory attitudes and to challenge any discrimination of which they become aware.

**4.0 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION**

- 4.1 Our grievance and disciplinary procedures will be used to deal with complaints about discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying involving staff. Complaints from clients are covered by Staying Put's Complaints Procedure. Complaints involving Board members should be through whichever of the above procedures is most relevant. We will treat any complaints that we have failed to follow our Equal Opportunities Policy seriously.

## **5.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 5.1 This policy is subject to review and improvement. It will be reviewed annually. Any suggestions for changes should be made, in the first instance, to the Manager.
- 5.2 Staying Put may ask clients using the services, job applicants, volunteers and trustees for information about their ethnic origin, disability, marital status, age or other personal information but will only do this for a specific defined purpose such as collecting statistical data for funders, for research or for our own monitoring to evaluate this policy's impact.

## **6.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

- 6.1 Staying Put aims to be an equal opportunities employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any factors irrelevant to a person's ability to do a job.
- 6.2 Staying Put regards discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, clients or of others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct. Condoning such behaviour could also be treated as a disciplinary offence. As well as disciplining the perpetrator(s), we will give appropriate support to people who complain of harassment of themselves or others.
- 6.3 Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices generally will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the equal opportunities policy.
- 6.4 Staying Put will attempt to accommodate staff requests to work flexibly, whether part time or some other working arrangement, for whatever reason, so long as it is possible to agree this/consistent with the needs of the organisation.
- 6.5 We recognise that organisations with 15 or more workers are obliged under the Disability Discrimination Act to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled people and to enable them to do their job without unnecessary difficulty. This obligation will be extended to all employers in October 2004. We will make adjustments which are reasonable, whether or not we are obliged to do so by law, and whether or not a disabled applicant or employee is covered by the definition of disabled under the DDA.
- 6.6 We accept our obligation not to discriminate against applicants and employees on the basis of their religion. We also respect the beliefs of all staff. We will try to accommodate employees religious beliefs by:-
  - 6.6.1 Allowing time and if possible a place for prayers during the working day and at the workplace.

- 6.6.2 Considering employees dietary requirements in catering for staff and when providing facilities for staff to eat and store food.
- 6.6.3 Allowing staff of particular faiths to take their holidays for religious festivals and other religious observance, if necessary, giving them priority over other members of staff not of that religion.
- 6.6.4 Trying to arrange job interviews or other important work meetings at times when they do not clash with important religious festivals.
- 6.6.5 Not imposing a dress code with which people of a particular religion cannot comply.

## **7.0 SERVICE DELIVERY**

- 7.1 Staying Put seeks to ensure that its services are accessible to all sections of the community. In particular;
  - 7.1.1 Staying Put makes public its commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered.
  - 7.1.2 Staying Put will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.
  - 7.1.3 Staying Put attempts to find ways of making our service accessible to everyone, including people for whom English is not a first language, people with visual or hearing impairments, and people who live in remote rural areas and/or cannot easily travel.
  - 7.1.4 Staying Put will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its activities are carried out in premises which are accessible to people with mobility difficulties
  - 7.1.5 Staying Put will be sensitive to the particular needs of service users by trying to provide for example, translations, childcare facilities run by vetted carers, and, when providing food, having regard to religious and other dietary requirements.

## DEFINITIONS

Staying Put understands discrimination to be unfavourable or prejudicial treatment of an individual or group of individuals on grounds irrelevant

- to that person or group 's abilities to perform work required of them by Staying Put
- Or**
- to that person or group 's entitlement to receive services from Staying Put

**Direct discrimination** is any less favourable treatment which cannot be objectively justified of a person or group of people because of a personal attribute or condition including but not limited to gender, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, or sexuality.

**Indirect discrimination** is any action which is applied equally to everyone but results in the less favourable treatment of one group of people compared to another group, and which cannot be objectively justified.

A person subjects another to **harassment** .....Where, on grounds (such as) race, (gender etc,) she engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of

- (a) Violating that other person's dignity *or*
- (b) Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for her.

*(Definition from Race Relation Act as amended in July 2003)*

Unlawful harassment can be on grounds of the race, religion, sexuality etc of the person being harassed, or because of whom they associate with, are friends with, live with or are married to.

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Date Agreed by Board of Directors	May 2005
Date Reviewed	May 2008
Date Reviewed	April 2010
Next Review	April 2012