

Sandwell Mind Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discriminatory Practice Policy

Sandwell Mind believes all people have the right to be treated fairly and with respect. Fundamental to this is the commitment to ensure equality of opportunity both in the provision of services and as an employer. Equal opportunities does not mean treating everybody the same - it means recognising people's differences and adapting the way we work in order to ensure that everyone is given a fair and equal chance.

Employment

As an equal opportunities employer Sandwell Mind will apply objective criteria to assess potential suitability for employment. There is a written recruitment and selection procedure to this end. Where possible we will seek to have some form of service user involvement in the recruitment and selection process.

The organisation aims to operate within the guidelines in the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Conduct and to comply fully with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, the Equality Act, and the Sex Discrimination Act. We are also committed to working within the GSCC (General Social Care Council) code of conduct for employers.

We aim to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the ground of age, gender, religion, belief, cultural or ethnic origin, race, nationality, disability, sexuality or marital status. Selection criteria and procedures are reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated entirely on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Once in post all employees will be given equality of opportunity. The organisation recognises that on occasion it may be appropriate to facilitate special equipment or training in order to enable employees to progress within the organisation.

Sandwell Mind has a written policy on the use of volunteers and is committed to ensuring that all potential volunteers are treated fairly and equally. However this does not necessarily mean that the selection process will be the same for every volunteer - it will be proportionate to circumstances and to the specific role that is being undertaken. It will also reflect any regulatory or contractual (ie funding) requirements that may apply to each particular service.

Service Users

We aim to ensure that no applicant for our services receives less favourable treatment on the ground of age, gender, religion, belief, cultural or ethnic origin, race, nationality, disability, sexuality or marital status.

There are written eligibility criteria for all of the services operated by Sandwell Mind. Assessment procedures are reviewed to ensure that individuals are offered a service entirely on the basis of their relevant needs and circumstances.

All those who use our services will be given equality of opportunity. Any applicant who feels that they have been unfairly denied access to a service has the right of appeal. There is a written appeals policy available on the organisation's website.

Anyone who feels that they have been denied equality of opportunity whilst in receipt of service offered by Sandwell Mind will be encouraged to use the complaints procedure so that their concerns can be investigated and responded to.

Staff are expected to make service users aware of their rights and obligations with regard to equal opportunities. This may sometimes mean that staff are required to act as advocates on service user's behalf. It can also mean that staff are required to point out unacceptable behaviour on the part of service users, if some aspect of this behaviour is affecting the rights and opportunities of others. Where appropriate, support plans will outline boundaries of unacceptable behaviour.

Sandwell Mind reserves the right to withdraw services to any service user if that person behaves in a discriminatory, disruptive or abusive manner to any member of staff, volunteer, service user or other person.

Anti- discriminatory practice

Sandwell Mind is committed to ensuring that anti-discriminatory practice is promoted throughout the organisation. The organisation aims to develop its workforce to become fully sensitive to the culture, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, beliefs and social background of others.

Sandwell Mind will work actively with staff members and service users in order to promote and encourage a positive attitude towards difference. Individuals will be encouraged to extend their awareness of social and cultural settings beyond their immediate experience.

Sandwell Mind aims to empower its employees to recognise and to challenge any discriminatory or oppressive language and behaviour, and to be pro-active in presenting positive images of the diversity of people that make up our society.

The organisation will take all reasonable steps to ensure that work settings and care settings celebrate and value differences in identities, cultures, religions, beliefs, abilities and social practices. We aim to ensure that work settings and care settings are welcoming, non-threatening and stimulating places to be, places where individuals are valued because of their differences and not in spite of them.

Responsibility for Equal Opportunities

It is the responsibility of all committee members, employees and volunteers to uphold the integrity of this policy. Employees are required to do this as a condition of employment.

Implementation

The organisation will ensure all that committee members, employees and volunteers are made aware of the Equal Opportunities and ADP policy during their induction to Sandwell Mind.

All staff will receive training in equal opportunities and diversity as part of the organisation's training programme. Where appropriate similar training may be offered to service users.

The organisation will periodically audit the age, gender and ethnic origin of staff and users and may target recruitment or service delivery at certain sections of the community in the light of this information.

On an annual basis the organisation will monitor its performance against the equality access targets it has set, and will ensure that a clear plan of action is in place to address any issues as required.

Publication of this Policy

The policy is published and freely available for download on Sandwell Mind's website www.sandwellmind.org.uk

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least every twelve months, and will be updated according to changes in legislation or circumstances.

Relevant policies and legislation

Sandwell Mind staff code of conduct
Sandwell Mind policy on Harassment
Sandwell Mind recruitment and selection procedure
Sandwell Mind service eligibility criteria
Sandwell Mind training policy
Sandwell Mind policy on the use of volunteers
Race Relations Act 1976
Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Human Rights Act 1998
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice.
GSCC Code of Conduct for Employers
Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
The Equality Act 2006