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**ISN EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

**Introduction**

The Inner Strength Network is committed to equality of opportunity for all.  The responsibility for ensuring equality and diversity among potential and actual users, members, employees and job applicants, rests ultimately with the Trustee Board.  Members of staff - full-time, part-time and volunteers - are responsible for the implementation of the policy, its observance, monitoring it on a day-to-day basis and reporting on its operation to the Trustee Board.

The policy consists of the following: statement of intent

Statement of Intent

The Policy

Complaints Procedure

**2. Statement of Intent**

This means in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we will not discriminate on the basis of:

* age.
* disability.
* gender reassignment.
* marriage and civil partnership.
* pregnancy and maternity.
* race.
* ethnic origin.
* culture.
* religion or belief.
* sex; and sexual orientation.
* Marital status; and
* Socio-economic background

The policy consists of the following: Statement of intent The Policy Complaints Procedure

**3.**  **The Policy**

ISN commitment to Equality and Diversity are as follows:

* We recognise that some groups have experienced discrimination and disadvantage, and we will work hard to redress this by tailoring our services, where possible, to meet individual needs and making reasonable adjustments to facilities and buildings where this is practicable.
* We are also committed to the principles of anti-oppressive practice.

This means that we are mindful of the power relationships between males and females, adults and children and young people, people from racial or ethnic minorities, those who have a hidden/physical disability and those who would define themselves as able bodied; we are also aware of the differences in power between those who experience poverty and those who are well resourced, those who have mental illness or are vulnerable because of learning difficulties.

* We seek to ensure that power given in service to those who are vulnerable and in need of additional support.

* We work hard to ensure that we empower those we serve by being respectful of their individual needs, seeking to listen and learn from them about their situation and by working with them to support them in identifying solutions to their problems.

* We will not use coercion, manipulation or any other abusive behaviour that exploits or undermines a person’s rights.  We ensure this through safer recruitment practices, providing on-going training and supervision for staff, trustees and volunteers.

* To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees, trustees and volunteers are recognised and valued.
* To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying of harassment will be tolerated.
* To ensure training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
* To promote equality in the workplace, which it believes is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
* To regularly review all employment and volunteering practices and procedures to ensure that no job applicants, staff, trustees or volunteers are treated less favourably than others.
* To regularly review services to ensure they are accessible and appropriate to all groups within society.
* Any breach of this equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action.
* To provide information and training to all employees, trustees and volunteers so that they are fully aware of the issues relating to Equality and Diversity and their responsibilities relating to it.
* To develop Equality Action Plan, to ensure our Equality and Diversity policy is fully implemented.
* To monitor and review the policy annually.

CRB Policy

* We will request enhanced police checks for all our employees, trustees and volunteers. The requirement will be clearly stated in the application pack.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

* ISN will take seriously any complaints of discrimination and will not victimise people who make such complaints.
* Staff will be made aware as part of the induction process of their responsibilities in relation to Equality and Diversity and that discriminatory behaviour will be fully investigated and dealt with using the Disciplinary procedure.

Bullying and Harassment

* ISN upholds the rights of all employees and volunteers to be treated with respect and dignity and to work in an atmosphere free from bullying and harassment.
* All employees, trustees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour is sensitive to others and for ensuring that they do not condone or support the bullying or harassing behaviour of others.
* All complaints of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously and should be raised using the Grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated and, the disciplinary procedures will be followed.

* **Service Provision:**  Users must have easy access to information about ISN’s services which may involve making materials available where appropriate in a variety of media, e.g. in large print or electronically.  In particular, all printed materials will be in a minimum of 10pt type.  It is also recognised that ISN will not be able to meet all the demands made upon its services.  There will be a drawn up and publicly available list of priorities for the service which will be reviewed at least annually.

* Additionally, it is recognised that there may from time to time be complaints against members of staff or the service.  A notice will be displayed in the general office, giving details of how a complaint may be made.  The procedure will also be regularly publicised in the newsletter.

* **Recruitment and Selection:**  ISN aims to receive the widest response to employment vacancies.  All vacancies will be advertised.  The range of publications and agencies chosen will attempt to reflect the aim of reaching all sections of society.  Information sent to potential applicants will include the job description, a person specification and details of the Equality and Diversity Policy.  It will be standard practice to supply information in large print when requested - this will be noted in advertisements.

* **Terms and Conditions:**  ISN will endeavour to ensure that staff are not discriminated against through the terms and conditions under which they are employed.  Furthermore, ISN recognises that from time-to-time family and social circumstances may change and consequently that workers may need to change their conditions of work. ISN will attempt, where circumstances and resources permit, to accommodate the needs of those workers.

* **Staff Support:**  Staff are entitled to support from management and colleagues.  Staff will receive regular supervision from their line manager.  Where this is not possible, ISN will make funds available from the staff development/training budget to allow for supervision to be obtained from other agencies or individuals.

* **Training:**  ISN recognises that training is an important factor in leading to job achievement and opportunity.  Induction training is particularly important and will be made available to all new staff.  When other needs are identified, every effort will be made to ensure that training is provided.

* **Purchasing:**  ISN will try to ensure that the goods and services it offers are accessible to all groups.  It will not knowingly receive or purchase goods and services from agencies which practise discrimination.

**Monitoring:**  Regular monitoring and reviews of all procedures will take place from time to time, to check the effectiveness of ISN’s Equality and Diversity policies.  Staff will be required to report the results of such monitoring to the Trustee Board *annually* and to recommend such amendments as are needed to ensure that the Equality and Diversity policies are effective at all levels of the organisation.

**SEE SEPARATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS**

**Reviewed MAY 2022**