

# Open Door Equal Opportunities Policy

## 1. Statement of Intent

- a) Open Door recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions and seeks to value and harness this diversity to make its services relevant and approachable for everyone.
- b) Open Door believes in equality of opportunity and values all individuals regardless of any collective and individual identity.
- c) Open Door believes that all people have a right to employment and to services which are free from direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of race, colour, caste, national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, political beliefs, social class, employment status, financial status, responsibility for dependants, gender, ill health, disability (sensory impairment and learning disability), marital status, HIV/AIDS status, language (including the language of deaf people), gender identity, sexual orientation, age, trade union activity, height, non-relevant criminal conviction or any other condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- d) Open Door seeks to promote diversity and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner.
- e) Open Door will work to reduce unfair discrimination in society and seek to eliminate such practices within the organisation.

## 2. General Principles

- a) All potential or actual service users, Board of Trustees members, volunteers and employees will be treated with equal respect.
- b) Open Door's activities and services will be open and accessible to all people within its area of benefit.
- c) Open Door will ensure as far as is practicable that all sections of the community are represented in its employees, service users, and on its Board of Trustees.
- d) All Open Door staff will be recruited and where appropriate promoted on merit regardless of background and other discriminatory factors unless the needs of users justify a more balanced representation.
- e) Board of Trustees members and staff will be provided with training in the application of equality opportunity and anti-discrimination practices and OD will seek to ensure that all people involved in the service understand the issues surrounding discrimination.
- f) Open Door will seek to ensure its premises are accessible and welcoming to all sections of the community within the aims and resources of the service.

## 3. Responsibilities

- a) The Board of Trustees as the employer has overall and final responsibility for ensuring that OD meets its responsibilities in relation to the Race Relations Act (1976), Sex Discrimination

Act (1975-85), Equal Pay Act (1970), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and all other relevant or subsequent legislation.

- b) The Trustees will ensure the development of a strategic commitment to diversity which goes beyond adherence to any legal responsibilities.
- c) The Co-Directors' Group has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is put into practice and in particular will ensure that:
  - i. staff receive sufficient information and training to enable them to implement this policy in their everyday work.
  - ii. line managers are aware of their responsibilities to their staff in relation to equal opportunities and diversity.
  - iii. there are arrangements in place to properly monitor this policy.
  - iv. managing diversity is internally driven, from a sense of commitment by the organisation and its employees wherever they are based.
  - v. those responsible for equality and diversity issues have the resources to carry out their work effectively.

## **4. Employment and Recruitment**

### **Employment**

- a) Employment will be undertaken in accordance with the Open Door Equal Opportunities policy and the principles outlined therein.
- b) All elements of the job description, person specification and shortlisting and interview process for each post will be non-discriminatory in nature and will be applied equally to all candidates.
- c) Open Door recognises that the nature of society and of disparities in wealth and status can result in disadvantage, both in its work and beyond, being experienced by certain groups. It will seek to ensure that all its employment practices treat potential, current and past employees with dignity and only on merit, and will avoid any inappropriate discrimination, positive or negative. It will also ensure that employees will be treated with tolerance and sensitivity.

### **Recruitment**

- a) Job descriptions, person specifications and application forms are reviewed for each vacant post to eliminate references to non-essential experience or qualifications that might directly or indirectly discriminate against candidates.
- b) All posts with an employment contract are externally advertised. A copy of the equal opportunities policy statement is sent to job applicants, along with the application form, job description, person specification and other relevant information. A diversity monitoring form will also be sent to candidates; this information will be separated from documentation used to assess the suitability of a candidate for appointment and aggregated for management reporting purposes. This monitoring will cover all areas required by legislation:

- c) Age discrimination, Religion and belief, Sexual orientation, Disability discrimination, Gender equality - sex discrimination, Race discrimination, Transgender discrimination.
- d) Short-listing decisions will be carried out by a selection panel based on the criteria listed in the job description and person specification. Any short list will be of reasonable length based on interviewing time that can be made available by the Centre.
- e) A selection panel aims to treat candidates equally, and to interview them only in relation to the job description and person specification. Decisions are based exclusively on how well candidates match the published required and desirable specifications. The selection panel has responsibility for overseeing and implementing the selection process. It will be constituted and chaired according to the nature of the post and pertinent institutional roles.

## **5. Training**

- a) Relevant training opportunities will be published widely to all employees.
- b) Training will be made available to Trustees and staff without discrimination and with regard to individual circumstances.

## **6. Engagement of consultants and contractors**

- a) Open Door will follow equal opportunities principles in engaging consultants or contractors.
- b) Open Door will draw its equal opportunities principles to the attention of all consultants and contractors it engages who will each be expected to work within the spirit and practice of this policy.

## **7. Religious and cultural needs**

- a) Open Door will endeavour to ensure that its work requirements are consistent with both the needs of the organisation and the religious and cultural needs of staff and consult with outside experts if necessary in order to achieve this.
- b) Where staff have particular religious or cultural needs which conflict with work requirements managers will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met.

## **8. Disability**

- a) Open Door will endeavour to support and encourage employees who are disabled or become disabled to work within the organisation and wherever possible will assist with their rehabilitation and retraining.
- b) Open Door will endeavour to maintain disabled staff in employment wherever practicable by adjusting working conditions and practices and redeploying to alternative work where necessary.

## **9. Personal conduct**

- a) Each staff member should respect all others with whom they come into contact on Open Door business and realise that behaviour which they find acceptable may not be so regarded by others.

- b) Harassment at work in any form is entirely unacceptable and each member of staff carries responsibility for their own behaviour under the policy.
- c) Should any harassment or unacceptable abuse of staff members occur the person or persons responsible will be liable for disciplinary action under the OD disciplinary procedure and possible legal action.
- d) Open Door will provide support for employees who allege harassment and a proper investigation of complaints will take place under the Open Door complaints procedure.

## **10. Consultation**

- a) Open Door will monitor the usage of and enquiries concerning its services and actively encourage the views of groups which experience discrimination in order to improve its service delivery.
- b) Open Door will ensure that such monitoring covers all aspects of its service including management practice, recruitment, employment, volunteer involvement, training and development, publicity/publications and access to resources.

## **11. Marketing, publicity and public relations**

- a) Open Door will ensure that its services are well publicised to ensure equality of access.
- b) Open Door publicity will include statements about our commitment to diversity and equal opportunities.
- c) Open Door publicity material will strive to provide information and resource materials which are jargon free and free from racist, ageist, disabling, homophobic or sexist images, language or attitudes or any other discriminatory practices.

## **12. Communication**

- a) Open Door will endeavour to create a climate of communication which reflects the needs of different linguistic and cultural groups by providing interpreters and signers as appropriate.
- b) Open Door will endeavour to provide information in a variety of formats such as audio tape or large print on request and will seek to use information communication and other technologies to improve the way in which it communicates.

## **13. Working practices**

- a) Open Door will seek to actively engage all communities in its work and to respect all cultural differences and expectations with regard to catering, times and dates of meetings, modes of dress and conduct, language, translation policy and forms of address.

## **14. Monitoring of service users**

- b) Users of all services at Open Door will be invited to complete diversity monitoring forms on a voluntary basis covering Age, Religion and belief, Sexual orientation, Disability, Gender.