



PURPOSE

The Equal Opportunities Policy of B&H Community Initiatives has four inter-related purposes. First, it is designed to ensure that all stakeholders of the organisation, including Trustees, managers, paid and unpaid staff whether full-time or part-time, are fully aware of equal opportunity law, and that all personnel policies and procedures, including recruitment, pay, appraisal and promotion are based entirely on an individual's ability to carry out the requirements of their post, and to do their job well.

Second, it ensures that B&H Community Initiatives celebrates diversity, recognising and respecting individual difference, and valuing the varying qualities which each individual brings to their job, and to the organisation.

Third, the policy reflects our commitment to guard against unfair discrimination for its service users, and seeks to ensure the accessibility of its services through both its physical environment and its communication strategy.

Fourth, all staff are expected to promote the values of equal opportunities, and to be proactive in challenging expressed attitudes or behaviour, either within the organisation or in dealings with clients or other organisations, likely to be construed as in breach of the policy.

We pride ourselves on creating an environment that celebrates diversity, respects individual differences and values the unique qualities that each individual contributes.

CONTEXT

All organisations are obliged to comply with current equal opportunity law, including:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976, and Race Relations amendment Act 2000
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Directives on Religion and Belief (2003), Sexual Orientation ((2003) and Age Discrimination (2006).

Additionally the MacPherson Report (1999) drew attention to Institutional Racism which,

“...can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people”.

Such ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping similarly manifest themselves in relation to disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, and attitudes towards individuals and groups who differ in some way from what is assumed to be mainstream culture. It is also important to be mindful that people who experience unfair discrimination do not all share the same needs and interests. For example, amongst those with physical disabilities are diverse age groups, black people, people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community, or people who have strong religious affiliation. There are wide differences within groups who experience disadvantage, as well as overlaps between them.

As an organisation B&H Community Initiatives serves this wide diversity of individuals, groups and communities, some who may perceive that they are subjected to unfair discrimination within society. It is within this context that B&H Community Initiatives seeks to develop and disseminate a robust Equal Opportunities Policy through which the sensitive and thoughtful application of the principles of Equalities are pervasive throughout the organisation in order to ensure that all individuals and groups feel welcomed within our organisation, and feel able to make use of its services.

POLICY

- B&H Community Initiatives is committed to equality of opportunity for its staff, service users and stakeholders, endeavouring to ensure that individuals and groups with whom it has working relationships are not disadvantaged or subject to unfair discrimination because of their race, colour, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, HIV status, age, class, or any physical or mental disability.
- B&H Community Initiatives seeks to devise and deliver sensitive and appropriate services which meet the needs of its service users, and reduces barriers to access for disadvantaged groups.
- All staff will conform to this policy and ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and implementation within the organisation, and in relation to the many individuals, clients, groups and communities it serves.
- In support of Equal Opportunities, B&H Community Initiatives will provide training, consultation and monitoring to ensure that this policy is adhered to.
- Any suspected or alleged breach of this policy is likely to be a disciplinary issue, and will be reported to a line manager or to the CEO.
- Staff are expected to promote the implementation of the policy, including being proactive in challenging behaviour or expressed attitudes likely to be

- construed as a breach of the policy. The organisation will support staff and volunteers who challenge unfair discrimination which occurs in connection with B&H Community Initiatives work.
- B&H Community Initiatives is committed to the provision of training, consultation and monitoring in support of its Equal Opportunities Policy, and will ensure that the policy is appropriately reflected in procedures for staff recruitment, and throughout the portfolio of policies governing the work of the organisation.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Equal Opportunities Code of Practice for the recruitment and selection of staff.
Equalities statement.

Policy Review Group

Dec 2006