



Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

Total Wellbeing Matters, as an employer and service provider, has a part to play in reducing the disadvantages which certain people and groups have experienced, both now and in the past. We also want our staff to be truly representative of the community they serve.

We extend the same principle to everyone. We recognise that, while much can be achieved through developing policies and procedures to meet our legal and other obligations, real progress requires a programme of action that involves the participation of everyone. Genuine Equal Opportunities in every workplace and every service requires a commitment from everyone.

The Law

We wholeheartedly accept the statutory requirements laid down in the Equality Act. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, pregnancy, parenthood, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as 'protected characteristics'.

In addition, staff should not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Unlawful discrimination can include:

- Direct discrimination – where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic.
- Harassment – where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics.
- Associative discrimination – where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination – where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic.

- Third-party harassment – when an employee is harassed by third parties such as clients and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic and the employer has failed to take action.
- Victimisation – where an employee is subject to a detriment because he/she has made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance, or because he/she is suspected of doing so.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments – where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

The following statements of policy provide a framework within which we will seek to develop programmes and initiatives.

Responsibilities

The senior management team are responsible for promoting equal opportunities.

All staff share the responsibility for ensuring that the Equal Opportunities Policy is promoted and implemented fairly and effectively.

It is the individual responsibility of every member of staff to seek to ensure the practical application of the policy. Total Wellbeing Matters wishes to state explicitly that acts of direct and indirect discrimination and failure to comply with the provisions of the policy cannot and will not be tolerated and will be investigated. Disciplinary action may then be taken against the individual(s) concerned.

In addition, if any member of staff or volunteer considers that he or she is the subject of, or witnesses, unequal treatment, a complaint may be made through the agreed procedures for dealing with grievances, harassment or whistleblowing.

Equal Opportunities in Employment

Statement of Policy

Total Wellbeing Matters aims to achieve genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities as an employer.

Implementation

This policy is made available to all new staff and copies are available on the website. The principles and practices of the policy are covered by their Line Manager during induction.

Staff

- Total Wellbeing Matters will ensure that the ways in which jobs are designed, advertised and filled meet the requirements of our equal opportunities policy and the Equality Act.

- Information, training, advice and guidance, as appropriate, will be given to those staff involved in the recruitment and selection process.
- Permanent paid posts will normally be advertised externally, and all posts will be advertised internally within Total Wellbeing Matters as a minimum. Advertisements, job descriptions, application forms and person specifications for each job will be designed to ensure that no unnecessary requirements or qualifications are called for. Unrelated criminal convictions will not be taken into account.
- All potential applicants for jobs will be asked to complete and return a diversity monitoring form so that we can check how inclusive our recruitment processes are.
- Interviews will take an unbiased approach, asking only those questions which relate to the job and are non-discriminatory.

Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery

Statement of Policy

We recognise that certain groups in our society are discriminated against, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally. Direct and indirect discrimination can occur when services are inappropriate, insensitive or inaccessible.

We are committed to providing quality services to our customers. We aim to promote equal access and appropriate levels of take-up of our services and facilities by all groups in the community.

Implementation

- All people with whom we work will be accorded equal respect and the same courteous, efficient approach. We aim to offer a warm and welcoming environment to all customers.
- The diversity of everyone is acknowledged and valued and access to services shall be according to our published service criteria alone.
- Our services aim to respond to such diversity by adopting a flexible, non-judgemental, anti-discriminatory approach that values each individual equally.
- Our services seek to provide each individual customer with a service that meets their individual needs and choices, within available resources.
- We shall continually review our service provision in order to develop more inclusive ways of working that more appropriately meet the diverse needs of the local community.
- We shall ensure, as far as is possible, that all our service activities and sites are accessible in accordance with the Equality Act. We are committed to challenging discrimination within our service provision through focussed staff training, development and support and a culture that respects and values the individual.
- Information will be written in plain English which is clear and easy to understand. Alternative formats, such as large print or by email, will be provided upon request wherever possible or assistance will be provided to help read and understand any such information. All information for customers will be in a minimum of 14pt font against a good contrasting background.
- We will hold on our records any communication preferences expressed by service users.

Monitoring

The success of any policy depends upon the commitment of all employees but particularly of senior management. The effectiveness of the policy in meeting the aims of the company can be judged by careful monitoring of the operation of the policy.