

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Discovery Initiative accepts that in society, certain groups of people and individuals suffer discrimination. We are positively committed to opposing discrimination against people on the grounds of race, colour, religion, class, age, disability, marital status, their trade union activities, or because they are lesbian or gay, or because they have dependants, or because they are ex-offenders, or because they have a history of mental distress.

As an employer Discovery Initiative is committed to ensuring that no job applicant, employee or volunteer is treated less favourably because of their gender, race, age marital status, being a lesbian or gay man, religion disability, being HIV positive or having AIDS or on any other unjustifiable grounds. We are also committed to ensuring that our recruitment practices are easily accessible to all sectors of the community. We have a positive attitude towards training and development for all our employees regardless of their status within the organisation.

As a service provider Discovery Initiative will endeavour to provide quality services which meet the needs of the community which it serves. Whenever possible we will try to respond to current and changing needs. This will include seeking the views both of existing and potential users on ways of improving the quality and relevance of our services. No individual or group will be treated less favourably because of their race, gender, age, marital status, being a lesbian or a gay man, being HIV positive or having AIDS, or on any other grounds that are unjustifiable.

We will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this equal opportunities policy and the results will be available to all users, volunteers, employees and members.

This Youth Club will challenge discriminatory actions and language

Implementation of our policy

Discovery Initiative shall promote equality of access to its services by the following means:

- Ensuring that publicity and information material (e.g. leaflets, posters, newsletters, reports) reflects a multi-racial community by providing information and publicity in appropriate styles.
- Liaising closely with organisations working with ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities to bring about a greater understanding of issues and sharing of resources.
- Designing its services so that people from the young people can benefit from them and positively encouraging them to do so.
- Provide training for all who provide services within Discovery Initiative in equal opportunities (including staff, volunteers and coordinators) and using established procedures to deal with any offensive behaviour.
- Using co-opted places, where necessary, to ensure that the membership of the Committee reflects the commitment that Discovery Initiative has to Equal Opportunities.
- Holding services and meetings in places that are accessible to people with disabilities.

VOLUNTEERS

Our policy is that volunteers shall not suffer discrimination in recruitment, support and training opportunities on the grounds of sex, race, age (except on the basis of insurance cover), colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, trade union activities, politics or religious beliefs.

To carry out this policy Discovery Initiative shall:

- monitor applicants for voluntary work in terms of sex, race and disability;
- provide training opportunities to volunteers including Equal Opportunities and how to deal with offensive behaviour;
- translate volunteer recruitment/support literature into appropriate languages.

The monitoring of equal opportunities with Discovery Initiative will be done on an annual basis. Discovery Initiative will maintain a record of the composition of current staff, volunteers, facilitators, clients and service users, and seek information for the following procedures:

- disciplinary
- grievance
- dismissals
- reasons for leaving

Discovery Initiative will also hold regular meetings for its clients and use these as a forum to feed back any discriminating practices/grievances to its staff and managers.

TRAINING

Discovery Initiative will take responsibility for the training needs of staff, volunteers and coordinators in relation to the equal opportunities policy.

All existing staff, volunteer, facilitators and coordinators should undertake some form of training to make them aware of the realities of discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, disability and discrimination faced by lesbian and gay men. All new members of the team should undertake similar training, preferably within 12 months.

New staff should be made aware of the training opportunities available to them and positively encouraged to take these up. This applies to all staff, whatever level in the organisation. In particular, staff, volunteer, facilitators and coordinators are encouraged to take up training which will enhance their work performance and career prospects.

SUPPORT

Discovery Initiative will actively encourage the staff to identify their own needs and will support them in attempts to meet these needs.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

It will be a condition of service that all staff, volunteer, facilitators and coordinators adhere to the equal opportunities policy and failure to do so shall be cause for disciplinary measures to be taken.

All service conditions will be periodically reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate against any of the before-mentioned groups.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The staff, volunteer, facilitators and coordinators and coordinators are responsible for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, but it is the responsibility of every staff member and management member to actively promote equality of opportunity within their own sphere of responsibility.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The work of Discovery Initiative at times necessitates the highest level of confidentiality. All steps that are practically possible will be taken to ensure that this happens.

Discovery Initiative acknowledges that we have a duty, both legal and moral, to ensure that we are not unfairly discriminatory in employment, management or in the services we provide.

This policy is binding on all staff, volunteer, facilitators and coordinators, coordinators and external helpers.

**Signed by the Coordinator
for Discovery Initiative
– 01/03/2010**