**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

**Introduction**

Diverse Leap is a small charity formed on 16 December 2021 with the aim of supporting people who are experiencing the symptoms of depression (or other mental health disorders). This aim is achieved through the provision of a place of safety where beneficiaries can be provided with free confidential advice, empathy, signposting to professional sources of treatment and practical support and activities to promote positive mental well-being.

**Aims**

Diverse Leap recognises that mental health disorders can affect anyone and everyone; however, the risks of developing poor mental health are particularly strongly associated with socio-economic deprivation and within minority communities. Diverse Leap therefore aims to create a safe, secure environment where every beneficiary is welcomed equally, regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, race, sexual orientation and where they live.

**Accessibility**

Diverse Leap will always endeavour to use venues that are accessible to wheelchair users and (for events attended by forty or more people) equipped with a PA system and a hearing loop. This will be a prime consideration when the charity is in a position to operate from its own premises. In the interim, Diverse Leap will do our utmost to ensure that no potential beneficiary is unable to access our support services or activities by reason of a physical disability or impairment. We will also welcome carers where beneficiaries are only able to attend if they bring a carer.

**Diversity**

Diverse Leap is committed to the benefits of diversity and fully recognizes that people from differing backgrounds and life experiences will provide an enriched perspective which will enhance the level of support available to our beneficiaries. As the charity matures, therefore, we will seek to ensure that our volunteer cadre are fully representative of the communities they serve. We will also ensure that our support activities suit the interests and meet the needs of a wide variety of people, and particularly those who would otherwise be a risk of being marginalized and underserved.

**Inclusion and Respect**

Every beneficiary, or potential beneficiary, should be made to feel equally welcome and supported during their interaction with Diverse Leap. Equally, all of our volunteer staff should feel safe and supported whilst working with the Charity.

At all times, people’s feelings and emotions will be valued and respected. Diverse Leap believes that bullying, sexist, racist, homophobic transphobic or otherwise offensive and inflammatory language and behaviour are simply unacceptable. Any such instances constitute harassment and will not be tolerated in the Diverse Leap environment.

**Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment**

Diverse Leap has zero tolerance of any instances of harassment and discrimination. For the purposes of this policy, discrimination is considered to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of distinct categories of people, or of an individual, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, gender or disability. Similarly, harassment is considered to be behaviour that causes emotional or mental suffering; this includes repeated unwanted contacts without a reasonable purpose, insults, threats, touching or offensive language.

While the charity accepts that some beneficiaries in severe mental or emotional distress may occasionally use inappropriate language to express their feelings, inflammatory actions or remarks with the clear intent to demean or upset an individual, or a group of individuals, are unacceptable and is likely to result in the perpetrator being asked to leave the Diverse Leap community.

If any member of staff or a beneficiary believes they have been discriminated against by Diverse Leap, or harassed at a Diverse Leap event, they should raise this in the first instance and as soon as possible with the Chief Executive Officer (Tara Leyshon, diverseleap@gmail.com).

The Chief Executive Officer, supported by a trustee, will initially investigate the complaint, listening to the views of all involved. [If the complaint is against the Chief Executive Officer or a trustee, they will play no part in the investigation which will, instead, be conducted by two other trustees]. If the complaint is against a single individual (either a volunteer or beneficiary), this person will have the opportunity to express their point of view, accompanied by a friend. The person making the complaint will also be afforded this opportunity...

Providing that the alleged instance of discrimination or harassment does not break the threshold for Police investigation (under the Equality Act 2010 or Harassment Act 1997), then Diverse Leap will seek to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level and, if the complaint is upheld, will take into account the views of the complainant using the principles of restorative practice to achieve the best outcome for all involved. This could, for instance, involve an apology and a commitment to further training.

Any decision to exclude a beneficiary or volunteer from Diverse Leap activities due to discriminatory or harassing behaviour or language will be made by the Chief Executive Officer alone. The individual concerned may, however, seek a second opinion from the Board of Trustees. Diverse Leap also undertakes to support people who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against.

If a complaint is upheld against Diverse Leap as an entity, the Board of Trustees undertakes to work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future and must inform the staff and beneficiaries of how they intend to do this.

**Review**

This Policy was formally adopted by the Diverse Leap Board of Trustees on 28 January 2022 and will be reviewed at least every two years.

**Policy endorsed by the Board of Trustees**

**28 January 2022**