



Equality, Equal Opportunities and Empowerment Policy

This policy is designed to assist ADHD Norfolk in fulfilling its intention of being an equal opportunities employer and service provider.

1. Purpose of the Policy

- To ensure that ADHD Norfolk does not discriminate against people either directly or indirectly.
- To ensure that no one applying for a job, employed by, using or potentially a beneficiary of the organisation receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, class, age, disability, religion or belief, lifestyle, sexual orientation, etc..
- To ensure that no one is disadvantaged by conditions of employment, job requirements or eligibility criteria that are not justifiable.

2. General Policy Statement

ADHD Norfolk recognises that many groups within society are devalued and disadvantaged by discrimination and harassment, potentially in all areas of their lives.

3. Values

ADHD Norfolk recognises and values the diversity of our staff and volunteers and of the individuals and groups participating in our activities. We recognise that people are individuals, with their own needs and values, this diversity is valued and celebrated. We aim to ensure that equal respect is afforded to all those involved in the activities of the organisation.

ADHD Norfolk will work to ensure that people are not discriminated against on the grounds of age, belief, colour, culture, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or on the basis of belonging to any socially excluded group. We are committed to the full participation and empowerment of all individuals in our activities on equal terms.

ADHD Norfolk recognises that people face disadvantage and discrimination both in employment and in relation to access to services/activities. We are strongly committed to preventing and counteracting discrimination in all aspects of our work and to removing barriers to participation in both employment and activities. We will take an active approach to challenging discrimination and to working towards achieving social inclusion. We will provide targeted support where appropriate to meet specific needs and enable access and participation.

ADHD Norfolk is committed to the empowerment of staff, volunteers, target groups, communities, beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, through inclusion in planning and decision-making at every stage of project design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

ADHD Norfolk recognises the social model of disability (see appendix 1), defining it as the loss of opportunity to take part in mainstream activities because of physical or social barriers and is committed to the removal of such barriers to the inclusion of disabled people at all levels of society.

4. Principles of equality

ADHD Norfolk is committed to the following principles of equality:

Diversity - recognising differences in needs, values, beliefs, abilities; respecting and celebrating those differences; responding to diversity by adapting projects and activities appropriately and providing support to meet different needs.

Equity - preventing and challenging discrimination - people who participate in activities services are entitled to do so free from discrimination and harassment; ensuring that all our communications use images and language which promote a positive message on diversity and inclusion; establishing management structures and processes that are just, open and transparent and that demonstrate examples of best practice throughout the organisation.

Access and Inclusion - ensuring there are no artificial barriers to participation in partnership activities; offering support to meet individual needs (e.g. childcare, interpreters) and to enable participation; ensuring that all activity venues are physically accessible; ensuring that all venues are culturally appropriate; removing barriers to employment; ensuring that employment practices and procedures reflect best practice; taking positive action, within the law, to encourage underrepresented groups to apply for posts within the organisation.

Communication - ensuring that information about our services is accessible through using language that is easily understood; providing appropriate translation and interpretation; providing appropriate options for disabled people.

Quality - setting achievable high standards in the delivery of all Development Partnership activities, and ensuring that high quality services are enjoyed by all participants.

4.1 Current UK Legislation

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) is the first legislation in the UK to address the issue of discrimination against people with disabilities. The Act protects people from discrimination in employment including placing a duty on an employer to make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements or premises, and requires services providers to provide the same standard of service to people with disabilities as to those without a disability. From 1 October 2004, all physical barriers to access such as narrow door openings, steps and stairs, must be removed or overcome.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has produced Codes of Practice setting out the responsibilities of employers and services providers under the Act.

ADHD Norfolk recognises that disabled people can be disadvantaged and suffer discrimination in employment and in access to services/activities and is committed to ensuring that Partnership activities operate within the provisions of the Act and within the Codes of Practice.

Sex

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and The Equal Pay Act 1970 (EPA) set out the basic principles that men and women should not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their sex or marital status.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has published Codes of Practice that give guidance on the interpretation of the legislation and advice on good equal opportunities practice.

ADHD Norfolk recognises that people can be disadvantaged and suffer discrimination, on the basis of their sex, in employment and in access to services/activities and is committed to ensuring that Partnership activities operate within the provisions of the Acts and the Codes of Practice.

Race

Under the Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA) it is unlawful to treat a person less favourably than another on racial grounds in relation to employment and the provision on services. This Act has been amended in the light of the EC Race Directive (2000) which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin in relation to a wide range of areas including, employment, and

training, the provision of services, education, housing and healthcare. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 includes a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups. The Commission for Race Equality (CRE) publishes Codes of Practice providing interpretation of the legislation and guidance on best practice.

ADHD Norfolk recognises that people can be disadvantaged and suffer discrimination, on the basis of their race, colour, culture, or ethnic origin in employment and in access to services/activities and is committed to ensuring that Partnership activities operate within the provisions of the Acts and within the CRE Codes of Practice, working to combat discrimination and promote positive community relations.

Other

The EC Employment Directive (2000) prohibits discrimination in the context of sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and disability. Some amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act will be made, coming into force in October 2004. For the first time regulations relating to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion and belief will come into force in December 2003 and those relating to age will come into force on December 2006. Amendments to regulations relating to discrimination on the grounds of sex will be phased in from July 2003. Changes will include a consistent definition of direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation across all strands of equality legislation.

5. Specific Policies:

The specific policies below are not intended to be an exhaustive list but address the issues facing groups within society who are most frequently disadvantaged through prejudice or economic situation.

5.1. Anti-Discrimination

ADHD Norfolk will not tolerate discriminatory practices by any of its staff, volunteers or members. It is committed to the elimination of harassment, discrimination and prejudice.

The following behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Attacks on individuals or groups on the grounds of race, gender, class, age, degree of ability, religion or belief, lifestyle, sexual orientation.
- Discriminatory name-calling, insults, jokes or threats.
- Similar written remarks.
- Provocative behaviour, for example, wearing fascist insignia or racist/sexist badges.

- Bringing any material, for example magazines or leaflets into the office which in any way supports discrimination.
- Encouraging others to harass or discriminate in any of these ways.

In the event that such behaviour does occur it will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and dealt with according to the disciplinary procedure.

5.2. Black and Minority Ethnic People

ADHD Norfolk recognises that it is working in a diverse and enriching multi-cultural community and believes that nobody should be disadvantaged by reason of their race.

More specifically, ADHD Norfolk intends to combat racism by:

- Increasing awareness of racism, the importance of challenging it and the means of doing so.
- Working to increase the involvement of black and minority ethnic people in all aspects of its work.
- Working to ensure that the organisation's staffing, membership and volunteers reflect the community.

5.3. Women

ADHD Norfolk recognises that women are frequently disadvantaged within society through inadequate representation, abuse, low pay and relative powerlessness.

We intend to ensure that, through allocation of resources, flexibility and a broad balance of men and women on decision-making groups, the needs of women and girls are considered and met. Sexism will be combated through awareness raising and challenge.

5.4. Disabled People

ADHD Norfolk recognises that disability can be invisible as well as physical and aims to combat any discrimination on grounds of ability by:

- Stating in all recruitment packs and publicity materials the extent of accessibility of all premises referred to and our willingness to take practical steps to enable suitable disabled candidates to be employed.
- Identifying modifications and adaptations necessary to improve accessibility and fundraising to pay for the same.
- Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace to enable people with disabilities to work at ADD Norfolk.

5.5. LGBTQ

ADHD Norfolk recognises that the LGBTQ community are frequently discriminated against, harassed, stigmatised and denied basic rights in law and aims to ensure that their needs are considered and met by:

- Challenging discrimination and promoting the means of doing so
- Ensuring conditions do not reinforce heterosexist assumptions or require any person to declare their sexual orientation

5.6. Younger and Older People

ADHD Norfolk recognises that discrimination on the basis of age is very common and aims to ensure that this does not happen here by:

- Ensuring no recruitment packs refer anywhere to age and non-essential criteria which may imply that older or younger applicants will not be considered.
- Ensuring that opportunities for personal and professional development are open to all regardless of age.
- Ensuring that personnel issues like selection for redundancy are dealt with on merit against criteria solely related to the needs of the organisation.
- Ensuring that ageist attitudes are challenged and not reinforced by working conditions etc..

5.7. People with HIV and Related Illnesses

ADHD Norfolk recognises that people with HIV and related illnesses are discriminated against through prejudice, anxiety, ignorance and fear. We will combat discrimination on this basis by:

- Ensuring conditions of service do not require people to disclose their HIV status to staff or Management Committee Members
- Ensuring that members are not denied services on these grounds
- Ensuring voluntary disclosure is treated in confidence
- Exploring flexible working patterns to enable retention of staff affected

5.8. Homeless People

ADHD Norfolk recognises that homeless people and travellers are some of the most disadvantaged groups in society, often encountering discrimination for many of the above reasons as well as being homeless. We will aim to combat such discrimination by:

- Recognising agencies for the homeless as permanent addresses.

- Liaising with other services to identify additional support which we are unable to provide

6. Specific Procedures:

6.1. Recruitment and Appointment of Staff

Advertising

All vacancies will be advertised as widely as possible and response rates will be monitored to ensure that they are cost-effective. Funds allowing, this should include those read by minority interest groups.

Advertisements will contain details of accessibility. Advertisements must reflect the job description and person specification and concentrate on requirements that are essential to the post. Closing dates for application and provisional interview dates should be included in any advertisement.

Job Descriptions & Person Specifications

All posts will have a job description and person specification that must be reviewed before advertising: the CEO and Chair will do this. Job descriptions must accurately reflect the duties and level of responsibility required.

The necessary and desirable skills, experience, knowledge and aptitudes will be detailed in the person specification. It is very important that items listed as essential truly are in order to avoid discouraging potential applicants or inadvertent discrimination. Where qualifications or specific experience are required, it is essential to recognise alternatives and equivalents.

Monitoring Forms

All applicants will be asked to complete an anonymous equal opportunities monitoring form. This will be detached from the application form before circulation to members of the recruitment panel. The information gathered will be used to inform the monitoring process.

The Panel

The panel will consist of 2 - 3 people depending upon the seniority of the position. For senior positions at least one Management Committee member will sit on the panel.

The panel will select a Chair who will be responsible for the conduct of the interview and ensuring all documentation is in order. The Chair must understand equal opportunities interviewing practice and ensure that all the other panel members do so. Training will be provided where necessary.

Shortlisting

The panel will jointly shortlist applications using a mutually agreed scoring system against each criteria on the person specification and keeping tabulated records. Reasons for not shortlisting candidates should be briefly recorded in case of query.

Shortlisting should first remove all applicants who do not illustrate how they meet the essential criteria. If this still leaves too many for interview the desirable criteria should be used.

All panel members must be aware of any personal bias and guard against making assumptions. Where candidates have volunteered information not requested, such as marital status, this should be ignored.

Interviewing

The panel will agree the format of the interview beforehand. The Chair must explain this to all applicants.

Questions will be agreed in advance and all applicants will be asked the same set of questions in order to give each an equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the job. Additional questions in order to clarify details on the application form are admissible. All applicants will be given an opportunity to ask questions or make further comments if they think they have not been able to fairly represent themselves in answering the panel.

The Chair of the Panel is responsible for ensuring that no questions asked relate to marital status, partners, domestic set-up, children, politics, religion or trade union activities.

The use of acronyms should be avoided, for example, LBTH for London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Panel members will complete their own assessment form for each candidate. These will be collated when all applicants have been seen and the results discussed. The Chair will be responsible for taking the final decision based upon the panel's assessments against the criteria in the person specification. A first and second choice should be identified if possible.

The CEO (or Chair in the absence of the CEO) will retain all documentation for a year, in case of appeals or queries, after which it will be discarded.

Appointments

The successful candidate will be informed first. (If they do not accept an offer can be made to the second choice.) Once acceptance has been agreed, the unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as possible.

The CEO is responsible for writing a letter of appointment, subject to receipt of references satisfactory to ADD Norfolk, detailing terms of acceptance, start date and salary and enclosing any Criminal Record Bureau or health check requirements for completion and return.

The CEO will apply to the referees for written references and prepare a contract of employment in preparation for the first day.

Contracts of employment must be finalised within one month of starting and all posts will be subject to a 6-month probationary period.

6.2. Principles of empowerment

ADHD Norfolk is committed to working in partnership with target groups, communities and beneficiaries to develop a better understanding of diverse needs, to be more responsive and to achieve a culture of openness and honesty with better accountability to those participating in projects and activities.

- **Participation:** actively encouraging and facilitating the involvement of target groups, communities and beneficiaries in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and activities; providing opportunities for involvement in decision making at every stage of partnership and project development.
- **Listening:** improving quality through listening to the voices of target groups, communities and beneficiaries, valuing the views expressed and gaining a shared understanding of individual and community needs; actively seeking out and valuing the views of beneficiaries regarding their experience of projects and activities; providing feedback on the impact of their views on project development and evaluation.
- **Communication:** disseminating information to staff/volunteers, target groups, and communities/beneficiaries to enable informed participation in decision making; communicating clearly, using a range of media, ensuring we reach a wide range of people.
- **Sharing Power:** enabling target groups, communities and beneficiaries to increasingly speak for and represent themselves in local and national arenas.
- **Training:** providing training for staff/volunteers/target groups/beneficiaries in relation to equality and empowerment, to develop confidence and skills.

- **Improving outcomes:** developing more responsive, flexible projects and activities, leading to increased access and inclusion and reduced inequalities; enabling target groups, communities and beneficiaries to influence planning and decision making, ensuring projects and activities are appropriate and focused on identified need.
- **Complaints:** acting on complaints promptly; providing information about advocacy and support; being open, honest and accountable in the way decisions are made.
- **Evaluation:** involving target groups, communities and beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluating of projects and activities; involving target groups, communities and beneficiaries in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the equality and empowerment policy and implementation strategy.

6.3. Outreach/Accessibility to Beneficiaries

Physical Access

Given the age of the building it is unlikely that the administrative offices can be made fully accessible in the near future.

Other barriers

Barriers to effective access include language, sensory difficulties, confidence, knowledge and treatment. Different programmes have different outreach and access needs but all ADHD Norfolk programmes need to specify what criteria determine who the beneficiaries might be and what the benefits are. This information should be available in different formats to reach the widest number of potential beneficiaries.

It is essential that all people are treated courteously and fairly according to the criteria advertised in order to encourage confidence and develop our reputation.

6.4. Training and Development

All staff are required to undertake training and development activities in order to enable them to do their jobs effectively. ADHD Norfolk is committed to developing the potential of all staff, paid and unpaid, and ensuring that all training activities are related to the effectiveness of the organisation, are monitored and evaluated.

Induction

The first stage of any job will be induction. As well as the requirements of the post, this will cover the basics of health and safety, the structure of the organisation, policies and procedures and “cultural” issues like dress codes.

Training

Given the demands of the various programmes it is essential that staff are able to study at their own pace and at times which do not conflict with the needs of beneficiaries. Individual development needs, related to job requirements and future needs of ADHD Norfolk will be identified through regular supervision meetings and annual appraisal. Where these cannot be met in-house, external training opportunities will be identified. Where there are insufficient funds to meet all requests, the Director will decide the priorities. Take up of training opportunities will be monitored to ensure that all sections of the staff team have equal access and none are being unfairly excluded or disadvantaged.

Staff Development

All are encouraged to take a positive interest in their own development and to recognise that this is an ongoing activity not just something, which happens on courses. Attendance at conferences, seminars, etc., representing ADHD Norfolk in meetings, making presentations to other organisations or departments is all an important part of developing our skills.

6.5. Use of Consultants, Volunteers and Placements

All consultants, volunteers, placements and seconders working at ADHD Norfolk will be required to reflect this policy in their work practices and methods. The policy will be made available to them. In the case of volunteers, placements and secondees, any breach of this policy will lead to action under the disciplinary procedure as with staff and members.

In the case of consultants, the requirement to work within an equal opportunities framework will be included in the contractual agreement in order to allow us to terminate the contract in the event of a serious breach of policy. It may be possible to request a different person to undertake the work. The CEO (Chair in the CEO's absence) must handle all such cases.

7.0. Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed annually, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

Appendix 1

The Social Model of Disability

Definition of Disability

Disability is the loss of opportunity to take part in mainstream activities because of physical or social barriers.

Disabled People's Perspective

The Social Model is fundamentally different from other models. It assumes disabled people's perspective of the world and not societal 'expert's, such as the medical profession or charitable organisation.

Society's Responsibility

It places the responsibility for disability with society as a whole. Even though society has the resources and capability to assist people to have good lives, people are disabled by its unwillingness to alter itself. Social Model is fundamentally different from other models. It assumes disabled people's perspective of the world and not societal 'expert's, such as the medical profession or charitable organisation.

Changing Attitudes

Through education and experience of disability, we can 'unlearn' habits of thinking learnt from previous models, and replace them with fresh thinking gained from the Social Model. The more we know about disability and the more we experience disabled people, the more willing we are to change our attitudes and, therefore, society.

Removing Barriers

The aim of the Social Model is the removal of barriers to inclusion of disabled people at all levels of society.