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A. Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy covers how we treat everyone; employees, volunteers, people who use our services and other stakeholders and should be used when policies are being planned and services are commissioned.
- 1.2. The organisation believes that the experiences and perspectives shared through a diverse workforce and volunteer base can ensure that we are effectively serving the diverse needs of the population of Lancashire.
- 1.3. The organisation is firmly committed to equality and diversity at work and providing equal opportunities in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and redundancy.
- 1.4. The organisation recognises and accepts its responsibility to employees and strives to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.5. The organisation recognises and accepts its responsibility to people who use our services and other stakeholders and strives to ensure that everyone can live free from harassment and bullying and treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.6. The organisation ensures that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination in accordance with this policy.
- 1.7. Lancashire Mind strives to ensure that this policy is adhered to but in the event an employee feels that they are being unfairly treated due to a protected characteristic, this policy should be used in conjunction with the Grievance and Whistleblowing policies.
- 1.8. Lancashire Mind strives to ensure that this policy is adhered to but in the event a person who uses our services or other stakeholder feels that they are being unfairly treated due to a protected characteristic, this policy should be used in conjunction with the Complaints and Whistleblowing policies.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Lancashire Mind employees in line with The Equality Act 2010. The Act covers the same groups that were protected under previous equality legislation (the Race Relations Act 1976; Disability Discrimination Act 1995; Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003; Equality Act 2006 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003) and makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and Civil Partnerships
 - Pregnancy & Maternity

- Race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex (formally Gender)
- Sexual orientation

2.2 Lancashire Mind recognises all disabilities as defined by the Equality Act 2010 including:

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- HIV
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Hearing or sight impairments
- Mobility difficulties
- Mental health
- Learning difficulties

3. Objectives

- 3.1. To build a workforce that represents the diverse population of Lancashire.
- 3.2. To eliminate unlawful discrimination of employees, people who use our services and other stakeholders.
- 3.3. To provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for the public, contractors, volunteers and employees.
- 3.4. To ensure that all employees, people who use our services and other stakeholders are treated fairly, consistently and with dignity.
- 3.5. To ensure that all employees, people who use our services and other stakeholders have equal access to our services where appropriate and all aspects of employment.
- 3.6. To provide managers with a framework and clear guidance on how to manage equality and diversity in terms of service delivery and as an employer.
- 3.7. To ensure that all employees are aware of their contractual obligations to adhere to the organisations Equality and Diversity policy and to ensure that all staff are aware of the reporting requirements under the policy.

4. Principles

- 4.1. Managers and the workforce are expected to be mindful of discrimination which can happen directly or indirectly, and present as exclusion, bullying, harassment, victimisation or failure to make reasonable adjustments (by an employer).
- 4.2. The organisation will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or any decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.
- 4.3. The organisation will provide training to all existing and new employees to help them understand their responsibilities and rights and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.
- 4.4. The organisation will ensure that recruitment is fair and transparent and based solely on the person's ability to meet the person specification for the post. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job.
- 4.5. The organisation strives to ensure a workforce that adequately represents the population of Lancashire.
- 4.6. Confidentially of matters informed to the organisation in relation to disability, gender assignment, religion etc. will always be respected.
- 4.7. The organisation will train, develop and promote based on merit and ability alone and these opportunities will be available to all employees. Candidates for employment or promotion will be

assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

- 4.8. The organisation will provide services to anyone who meets the criteria of our services without bias or discrimination.
- 4.9. The organisation provides official guidance to those undergoing gender reassignment during their employment with Lancashire mind. Time off for Gender Reassignment treatment will be recorded separately from sickness absence and will not be used for absence management or monitoring purposes.
- 4.10. Employees must notify the organisation if they feel they are not being treated equally by colleagues, people who use our services or other stakeholders using the grievance policy.
- 4.11. Lancashire mind will take any grievance seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. Employees will not normally be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless it is made in bad faith or for some other malicious or inappropriate reason.
- 4.12. Anyone within the organisation found not to be adhering to the Equality and Diversity policy may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure as appropriate.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. It is the responsibility of:

5.1.1. Lancashire Mind

- a) To ensure the policy and procedures are readily available to all staff
- b) To provide support and guidance to managers on applying the policy
- c) To monitor and review the implementation and effectiveness of the policy
- d) To ensure equality and diversity is managed appropriately

5.1.2. Managers

- a) To implement the policy
- b) To support staff to understand and correctly follow the policy
- c) To manage staff in appropriate and fair manner and to support staff if they feel they are not being treated equally by colleagues, people who use our services or other stakeholders.

5.1.3. Staff

- a) To understand the Equality and Diversity policy and follow procedural guidelines
- b) To correctly notify the organisation if they feel they are not being treated equally by colleagues, people who use our services or other stakeholders.
- c) To fully cooperate in the process of investigating any equality and diversity related concerns.
- d) Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Lancashire Mind for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

For related policies, procedures and guidance, including the Recruitment policy and Gender Identity guidance, look in the Policies folder on Lancashire Mind's SharePoint site in Office 365.