



Charity No 294067

Equality and Diversity Policy

Issue 1.0

1 About this document

Document status

This policy has been adopted by Sutton Women's Centre through the Management Committee.

Document status history

Status	Date	Author	Document History
Draft 1.0	21 Sep 2015	Anna Cummins	First draft
Draft 2.0	18 Oct 2015	Liz Long	Added document version control and applied standard document format.
Issue 1.0	27 Nov 2015	Liz Long	Following review by the Management Committee at the Policy Meeting/PQASSO 23/11/2015

Document reviews

This procedure will be reviewed annually by Sutton Women's Centre Management Committee.

Master Copy

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SWC_Office (\\SWC-OPC1): Policies, Procedures and Standards\Policies

Filename

SWC_POL_EQUALITY_AND_DIVERSITY_I1

2 Equality and Diversity Policy

2.1 Regulatory context

The Equalities Act 2010 protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It makes it illegal for community groups with more than 25 members to exclude, discriminate against, harass or victimise people because they have particular characteristics.

We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and are committed to meeting them in full. We believe that a culture that embraces equality and values diversity will help us to ensure that everyone feels involved and included in our plans, services and activities.

2.2 Our Aims

Sutton Women's Centre aims to provide a welcoming and caring environment that promotes and reflects cultural and social diversity and is equally accessible to all. We aim to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer, member, service user or visitor experiences less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

We are committed to promoting a supportive and inclusive culture and to ensuring that our ethos of respect, inclusion, support and empowerment underpins all our activities. We take positive and proactive steps to ensure that we provide a safe and caring environment, free from discrimination, for our staff, volunteers, members, visitors and service users.

This particularly applies in relation to the 'protected characteristics' named in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, income, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, (see Annex 1 for explanations).

2.3 Our Responsibilities

Sutton Women's Centre understands that for equality to be achieved this policy needs to be made understandable to, and embraced by staff, volunteers, suppliers, partners, residents and members of the Management Committee.

All staff, volunteers, suppliers, partners and the Management Committee have a responsibility to ensure that their own language and actions are consistent with the spirit as well as the contents of this policy.

We will condemn any harassment of our employees, volunteers or users of our services, be it on the grounds of; age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

Harassment is defined as expressions of discriminatory or oppressive attitudes and which cause offence or discomfort. It may include comments, rudeness, gestures, suggestions, practices, physical contact or abuse.

Where an employee, volunteer or member of the Management Committee of Sutton Women's Centre is found to have behaved in such a way as to cause harassment, it will be regarded as a disciplinary offence. Where a service user harasses a member of our staff, or volunteer on any of the aforementioned grounds, we will use all means in our power to support that person against such harassment. Any action taken in these circumstances will be in line with Sutton Women's Centre complaints and grievance procedures.

We allow transgendered women access to the Centre. That is 'individuals who are identifying as and living as women full-time in all spheres of life'

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Centre Manager and the Management Committee.

2.4 Monitoring and Reviewing

Effective record keeping and monitoring, and acting on information gathered, are essential in order to measure effectiveness of this policy. For major projects we will monitor the diversity of service users. For services accessed by a small number of users we will not monitor these where there is the possibility of women being identified. Where women are in distress or crisis we do not believe it is appropriate to seek diversity data.

To ensure that we are meeting the aims and the spirit of this policy we will:

- Discuss and review annually how well we are implementing this policy and adjust our practices/develop an action plan where necessary
- Assess any significant new or revised policies and procedures for their impact on equality
- Embed equality and diversity into our plans for service delivery
- Ensure our employment practices and procedures are consistent with the aims of this policy

3 ANNEX 1 - Equality Act 2010 – Explanation of the Protected Characteristics

Age: An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

An age group would include “over fifties” or twenty-one year olds. A person aged twenty-one does not share the same characteristic of age with “people in their forties”. However, a person aged twenty-one and people in their forties can share the characteristic of being in the “under fifty” age range.

Disability: A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment as a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This section replaces similar provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and provisions in secondary legislation made under that Act.

Gender reassignment: A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Marriage and civil partnership: A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

- A person who is engaged to be married is not married and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.
- A divorcee or a person whose civil partnership has been dissolved is not married or in a civil partnership and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.

Race: Race is defined as

- Colour: includes being black or white.
- Nationality: includes being a British, Australian or Swiss citizen.
- Ethnic or national origins: include being from a Roma background or of Chinese heritage. A racial group could be “black Britons” which would encompass those people who are both black and who are British citizens.

This section replaces similar provisions in the Race Relations Act 1976. However, the power to add caste to the definition of race is a new provision.

Religion or belief: Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

- A religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief, such as Protestants and Catholics within Christianity.
- A belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief. A “philosophical belief” must
 - Be genuinely held;
 - Be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available;
 - Be a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour;
 - Attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance;
 - Be worthy of respect in a democratic society, compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Any cult involved in illegal activities is not covered. Beliefs such as humanism and atheism would be covered.

This section replaces similar provisions in the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006.

Sex:

- a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a man or to a woman;
- a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same sex.

Sexual orientation: is a person's sexual orientation towards:

- people of the same sex as him or her (in other words the person is a gay man or a lesbian)
- people of the opposite sex from him or her (the person is heterosexual)
- people of both sexes (the person is bisexual).

The definition is designed to replicate the effect of similar provisions in the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006.

Source: Equality Act 2010 and Explanatory Notes to the Equality Act 2010