

# HARPENDEN MENCAP

*The voice of learning disability*

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## Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy

### Policy Statement

Harpenden Mencap vision is for a organisation where all people with a learning disability are valued equally, listened to and included. To achieve this, Harpenden Mencap will:

- Listen to what people with a learning disability want.
- Support all people living with a learning disability in all parts of their lives.
- Give excellent information and advice.
- Work with people and groups that want the same things that Harpenden Mencap Society does.
- Fight for the changes that people with a learning disability and their families and supporters want.

We believe that our vision and mission can only be achieved if we make full use of the talents and resources of all our employees and volunteers. We want to be a diverse organisation, where individual differences are recognised and valued and where discriminatory attitudes or practices are challenged.

Diversity means the broad range of visible and non-visible differences that characterise people. Some of these qualities include race, age, colour, first language, ethnic or national origin, religion/community background, political belief, gender, disability, appearance, sexual orientation, age, responsibility for dependants, marital status, HIV status and work style.

At Harpenden Mencap we believe that everyone should have equal chances in life, no matter what their ability, ethnicity, gender, beliefs or life experiences may be.

- We want to make sure that our services and support are available to everyone and that they are used by people from different communities.
- We value difference and want to recruit and retain a diverse workforce to increase the range of skills and talents in Mencap. This makes us stronger as an organisation.

In carrying out this Policy, we will:

- Comply with the relevant anti-discrimination legislation and challenge discriminatory practice.
- Make every effort to attract people from all groups, either to work for Harpenden Mencap, to act as volunteers, to use our services or to be members.
- In confidence, collect and monitor data on sex, age, ethnic origin, community background (in Northern Ireland), and disability of all those applying to us for services, longer-term volunteering and employment.
- Regularly review our policies to ensure that they do not have an adverse impact on any of the people mentioned in the previous point.
- Have in place a policy on harassment and bullying.
- Take seriously and investigate urgently any alleged discrimination or harassment.
- Ensure that our services are relevant and accessible to all those who use them or want to use them.
- Provide advice and support to our employees about promoting a work environment which is inclusive and trusting and where good employee relations are promoted.
- Regularly review and evaluate this Policy.

### **Arrangements for meeting our policy objectives:**

We will consider the views and needs of employees, volunteers and the people we support from different backgrounds. We will:

- Look at how we could communicate more effectively (formally and informally).
- Encourage the involvement of employees, volunteers and people we support and members in planning and decision making.

### **Employment and volunteering policies:**

Our HR policies and procedures are designed to treat individuals solely according to their ability to meet job requirements.

This will ensure that in all aspects of employment – such as recruitment, training, appraisal, promotion and termination of employment, employees are treated as unique individuals.

In implementing our employment, volunteering, recruitment and training policies we will:

- Monitor recruitment procedures, employment and volunteering practices to ensure that our procedures are fair and that applicants are considered solely on the basis of merit and ability.

- Develop and implement action plans to address any inequalities which become apparent from our monitoring.
- Aim to attract and select the best employees and volunteers from all sections of the community through the application of valid, reliable and fair recruitment and selection methods.
- Ensure that all employees and volunteers are effectively inducted into Harpenden Mencap and know the relevant policies, procedures and standards of expected behaviour.
- Ensure that employees and volunteers are encouraged to achieve their full capacity and potential.
- Promote conditions where innovation, teamwork and participation can flourish.
- Ensure that work environments are not intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

## Services

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity in access to our services. We aim to achieve a consistent approach to diversity and equal opportunities in the delivery of all our services. We also expect people working on our behalf to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and equality in the work that they do.

We want to ensure that our services are welcoming to all people with a learning disability, and accessible to people from all communities.

To achieve this we will:

- Build close links with all sections of the community in all areas where we provide services and actively encourage those groups to benefit from our services.
- Be aware of our commitment to equal opportunities when appointing contractors/other agencies to work on our behalf or when entering into partnerships.
- Monitor procedures and practices to ensure that they are fair.
- Develop and implement action plans to address any inequalities which become apparent from our monitoring.
- Ensure that employees are aware of the needs and sensitivities of the people we support from different groups.
- Ensure that employees are aware of and implement local measures to promote fair treatment of the people we support.
- Understand potential barriers to accessing our services and take measures to remove them.
- Investigate urgently any claim of discrimination or harassment.
- Ensure that all the people we support into external employment understand their rights and obligations under the equal opportunities policy of their employing organisation.

## **Arrangements for publicising our Policy:**

We will make available a summary of our Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy to all job applicants, existing employees, prospective volunteers, current volunteers and the people we support.

## **Failure to adhere to the Policy:**

- We will do our utmost to protect employees and the people we support from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or group within the organisation.
- Discriminatory behaviour on the part of employees will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- If we find that non-contracted workers are behaving in a discriminatory manner, we will cease to use their services.
- Allegations of discriminatory behaviour by members or volunteers will be dealt with by the complaints procedure or other appropriate procedure.

## **Responsibilities of all members, employees and volunteers:**

All employees, volunteers and non-contracted workers are expected to support and work within Harpenden Mencap Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **The Senior Management Team will:**

- Ensure that Harpenden Mencap complies with equal opportunities legislation.
- Ensure that the Policy and its related action plans are implemented, monitored and regularly reviewed.
- Take responsibility for setting our diversity strategy and for monitoring its implementation.

## **All managers will:**

- Take action to promote a workplace where people are valued and have dignity.
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice.
- Take responsibility for the application of this Policy within their work area.
- Keep up to date with equality legislation and good practice by attending training and information opportunities.

**All members, employees and volunteers will:**

- Contribute to a working environment where all are treated with dignity and respect.
- Not harass abuse or intimidate other employees, potential employees, the people we support, visitors or others with whom they may have contact in the course of their work.

Signed: Karen Stafford

Date: January 2018

Policy review:

**Implemented- October 2015**

**Reviewed and updated – January 2017**

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