



Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy

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Introduction

Fire & Peace Recovery provides additional resources and support to individuals in their recovery from mental health challenges and substance dependency. We aim to put people in need at the heart of all that we do.

We are committed to creating an inclusive organisation, where we benefit from a variety of perspectives and better reflect the communities we serve. Fire & Peace Recovery recognises that people have different needs and experiences and we welcome the diversity of backgrounds.

As part of our overall commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, Fire & Peace Recovery champions an environment where everyone involved feels safe, respected, and valued. It is only through embracing equality and diversity that we create a compassionate organisation.

We expect all our people to be accountable for equality, diversity, and inclusion. By working together, we can ensure that everyone can perform at our best and that we can better support people in need.

This policy reflects that we see equality, diversity, and inclusion are an integral part of our organisation. It sets out how we will treat all volunteers, employees, partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders with dignity, fairness, and respect. This is regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Policy statements

Fire & Peace Recovery will treat all people, regardless of their background, with dignity and respect, inclusive of employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. We will ensure that we attract and retain people from the widest possible diversity of backgrounds and experiences to and at all levels of the organisation.

Fire & Peace Recovery will actively promote services and opportunities to a wide range of diverse communities from all backgrounds to ensure we are able to reach as many people as we reasonably can. We will ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all Fire & Peace Recovery premises and services are accessible to all people.

Fire & Peace Recovery will work towards the removal of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within and beyond our organisation. We will not tolerate any form of behaviour or activity which discriminates on the grounds of protected characteristics or other barriers.

Fire & Peace Recovery will comply with UK equalities legislation and our other external obligations including: regulatory requirements, accreditations, and good practice schemes.

Fire & Peace Recovery will ensure robust diversity-related data collection to better understand our people and audiences.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Fire & Peace Recovery to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and to ensure that everyone involved with us is aware of:

- The legislation, policy, and procedures for upholding equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Their role and responsibility for maintaining an equal, diverse, and inclusive environment.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the respect of equality, diversity, and inclusion within the organisation or with regard to a child/ adult receiving support from the organisation.

Scope

This policy applies to our governance, employment, service delivery, and volunteering practices. Everybody in Fire & Peace Recovery has an individual responsibility to promote equality and we will continue to work with beneficiaries, partners, staff, stakeholders, and parents to develop and share good practice and to bring about change.

Commitments

- Fire & Peace Recovery commits to preventing any unlawful discrimination in the support and management of our people and delivery of our services. All decisions will be objective and fair, taking into account any individual circumstances.
- Our services take a person-centred approach and diversity considerations are incorporated into our delivery to ensure accessibility for our all. We will prevent discrimination and we will protect the dignity of our beneficiaries.

- Fire & Peace Recovery implements a transparent, merit-based, and fair recruitment and selection process for staff and volunteers. We will provide appropriate training, including training on equal opportunities and unconscious bias, to support these objectives.
- We commit to providing and supporting channels for staff and volunteers to have their voices heard. This includes opportunities to network with one another and to provide feedback to different levels of management. Where reasonable we will make tailored adjustments to accommodate the needs of our staff and volunteers.
- Fire & Peace Recovery champions an environment that values difference and is free from prohibited discrimination, victimisation, bullying, and harassment. Any individual who experiences or witnesses discrimination / harassment is encouraged to report it. All complaints will be taken seriously, promptly and thoroughly investigated, and dealt with in a sensitive manner.
- Any new and reviewed policies, programmes, decisions that will affect our people or audiences will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment. This is to ensure that any negative impact on those with protected characteristics is mitigated wherever possible at all levels of the organisations and in all of our activities.
- This policy is reviewed no less than on a two yearly basis and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and / or government guidance or as a result of any other significant change or event.

Responsibilities

The **Board of Trustees** are responsible for championing equality, diversity, and inclusion and ensuring that the policy is consistent with the fundamental principles of Fire & Peace Recovery. They are responsible for implementing and developing this policy, as well as for providing resources, support, and leadership in the meaningful implementation of this policy.

The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to the **Director**. Our **senior staff** is expected to ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained, that regular reviews of employment practices are carried out, that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, and that all involved with Fire & Peace Recovery are aware of their responsibilities.

We expect all our **staff and volunteers** to accept and implement this policy. They should cooperate towards creating and maintaining an equal, diverse, and inclusive environment. They should also use appropriately inclusive language and behave in a way that will uphold the dignity of colleagues, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

Legal responsibilities

This policy ensures our compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The Act consolidates and streamlines previous UK anti-discrimination legislation.

Implementation

Recruitment, interviews, and selection

Fire & Peace Recovery strives to ensure that our trustees, staff, and volunteers reflect the wider community. As such, we will advertise work and volunteering opportunities widely to reach the largest possible range of candidates.

All recruitment material will not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists. Personal specifications may include “essential” and “desirable” requirements that are reasonable and justifiable job-related criteria.

In line with our aim to achieve equality of outcome, Fire & Peace Recovery will undertake positive action recruitment and selection programmes where necessary. We will aim to enable and encourage applications from persons with a protected characteristic that is under-represented in the organisation.

The assessing panel involved in interviewing and selection processes should reflect the gender, disability, ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation make up of Fire & Peace Recovery.

The panel will not select candidates on the basis of their protected characteristics or other barriers. The panel will not ask discriminatory questions, regardless of job requirements.

Employment practices, career development, and training

Employment and volunteer terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly. Benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff and volunteers, who will have access to them as appropriate. We operate a pay and benefits system that is transparent, based on objective criteria, and free from bias.

Fire & Peace Recovery will aim to accommodate staff and volunteer requests to work flexibly, whether part-time or some other working arrangement, so long as agreement is consistent with the needs of the organisation.

Fire & Peace Recovery will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the working environment or any work arrangements that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage of staff and volunteers.

Staff and volunteers will be given an appropriate induction so they can best fulfil the responsibilities of their role. Briefing on this policy will form part of the induction procedure.

Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals. Training courses and opportunities will be offered without any prejudice or discrimination.

Service delivery

Fire & Peace Recovery will seek to ensure that its activities and services are accessible to all sections of the community we serve. In particular, we will seek to remove barriers which may prevent those most at disadvantage from accessing our activities.

Our beneficiaries will receive fair, sensitive, and equal treatment when accessing our services, and will be treated with dignity and respect. Fire & Peace Recovery will make public its commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered.

ProceduresBullying and Harassment Procedures

Fire & Peace Recovery is committed to tackle inappropriate/offensive behaviour, intimidation, threats, discrimination, bullying or harassment, in relation to any protected characteristics and other personal features, such as language, class, employment status, HIV status, unrelated criminal convictions, political opinion, and trade union membership/non-membership.

Everyone at Fire & Peace Recovery has a responsibility to report any instance of bullying or harassment which they witness or which comes to their attention. Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to act as role models, proactively addressing instances of bullying and harassment.

It is in the best interests of all the parties that a complaint of bullying or harassment is reported as promptly as possible so that the facts of the matter can be accurately established.

An incident of bullying or harassment can be reported both informally or formally. If a person believes that themselves or others have been bullied or harassed and wants to address the matter **informally**, they should speak to a member of staff whom they trust. The member of the staff will be able to discuss the situation and advise on further steps on the matter. Options at the informal stage include approaching the person directly, approaching the person indirectly in writing, or asking a staff member to speak on their behalf.

The **formal procedure** may be more appropriate in instances of serious complaint or where an attempt at informal resolution has not been successful. If a person believes that themselves or others have been bullied or harassed and wants to address the matter formally a written complaint must be submitted to the Director or to a member of staff whom they trust. The complaint should include all relevant details, including full details of the alleged bullying, the identity of the person(s) concerned, any documentary evidence, details of any witnesses and any action that has been taken to date.

The Director or the member of the staff responsible for complaints will ensure that the issue is investigated appropriately, confidentially, and as soon as possible. They will also ensure that, where possible, someone without prior involvement will investigate the complaint. They will also be responsible with preparing a report on the findings and recommendations once an investigation is complete.

The aim of those procedures is to stop the undesirable conduct and prevent a recurrence. Fire & Peace Recovery has a “zero tolerance” policy and will investigate vigorously any allegations of bullying or harassment, regardless of whether the matter has been raised informally or formally.

Grievance Procedure

Any staff member or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should firstly raise the issue with the Director of the organisation.

Any service user who feels he/ she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should firstly raise the issue with the Director of the organisation. If the complaint is about the Director then this will be done through the Chair of the Trustees.

Any job applicant who believes that he/ she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the General Manager or the Chair of the Trustees.

All incidents of direct discrimination are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the Bullying and Harassment Procedures. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Disciplinary Procedure

Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment.

Any volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from Fire & Peace Recovery.

Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from Fire & Peace Recovery.

Monitoring

All diversity-related staff and volunteers', beneficiaries' and complaints' data will be captured and actively monitored, to ensure our policy and strategies are working effectively in practice and inform their development.

Procedures will be put in place to assess and monitor potential and existing partners, to confirm that their practices and behaviours are consistent with our commitment to equal opportunities.

We will undertake regular surveys in order to collect the views of our people, including seeking feedback from our people in relation to diversity.

Local and national data or statistics will be used to benchmark our performance. Where data is absent on for instance sexual orientation, we will consult with specialist agencies to seek advise.

This policy is reviewed, approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees. It is updated when required by legislation, to ensure that it reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and best practice for Fire & Peace Recovery, or every 24 months, whichever comes first.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Equality of opportunities entails that policies, procedures, and practices within Fire & Peace Recovery do not discriminate against the people within it, treating them fairly and equally regardless of background and protected characteristics.

Equality of outcome entails that policies, procedures, and practices within Fire & Peace Recovery recognise that not all groups have the same start in life. As such, we will seek to redress social imbalances by actively targeting under-represented people.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to Fire & Peace Recovery and to the community. We recognise that people from different backgrounds can bring different approaches, providing for efficiency, creativity, and innovation within our work.

Inclusion ensures that all people with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences are actively embraced and included. Fire & Peace Recovery strives to create an environment where everyone involved feels a sense of belonging.

Direct Discrimination occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably on the grounds of protected characteristics, as well as other personal features, such as language, class, employment status, HIV status, unrelated criminal convictions, political opinion, and trade union membership/non-membership.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when requirements or conditions unfairly or unjustifiably limit access to education, services, jobs, or volunteering opportunities. Whilst the requirements or conditions might first appear fair or neutral, they put people of a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage.

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because they have or are expected to complain about discrimination. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities, or any other protected characteristic. Harassment may be an isolated occurrence or repetitive. It may occur against one or more individuals. Harassment may be, but is not limited to:

- Physical contact - ranging from touching to serious assault, gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour;
- Verbal - unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter, offensive language;
- Non-verbal - offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation or nonco-operation and exclusion or isolation from social activities.

Bullying is persistent offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power, or unfair treatment that is meant to or does undermine, threaten and/or humiliate the recipient. Bullying includes but is not limited to:

- belittling the recipient's opinion, humiliating them publicly or privately;
- name calling, insults, unreciprocated or unwanted teasing;
- preventing access to opportunities such as training, withholding information, exclusion from meetings or activities;
- singling out or treating an individual less favourably without justification;
- gossiping about another individual with intent to damage their reputation.

Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries, who have been under-represented in specific areas, to participate in activities or reach a level of comparable competencies. Those measures mainly include support and training. "Positive discrimination" at the point of selection for work is not permissible.

Fire & Peace Recovery urges staff and volunteers to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests, and characteristics of individuals.