

ReFocus Equality and Diversity Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect and that staff and clients of ReFocus are not treated unfairly because of a discriminatory reason.

This policy is fully supported by the *ReFocus* management which is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.

ReFocus will therefore adhere to the following:

- a) be responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout its work at every level
- b) be committed to eliminate discrimination by reason of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, ability or disability and to encourage equal opportunities
- c) not discriminate or in any way treat anyone less favourably, on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, ability or disability
- d) ensure that it treats its employees and clients fairly and with respect
- e) not tolerate harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation of an individual (which the place to play/facility regards as forms of discrimination), including sexual or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal and work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs
- f) be committed to the immediate investigation of any complaints of discrimination on the above grounds, once they are brought to its attention. Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with its complaints policy and, where such a complaint is upheld, the management may impose such sanction as it considers appropriate and proportionate to discriminatory behaviour
- g) be committed to taking positive action where inequalities exist and the development of a programme of on-going training and awareness in order to promote the eradication of discrimination and to promote equality and diversity
- h) be committed to a policy of equal treatment of all clients and employees and requires all members and employees to abide by and adhere to these policies and the requirements of the relevant equalities legislation, including the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Age Discrimination Act 2006 as well as any amendments to these acts and any new legislation

In the event that any employee, member, or client feels that he, she or it has suffered discrimination or harassment in any way or that the policies, rules or code of conduct have been broken they should follow the procedures below.

1. The complainant should report the matter in writing to the management, Yolande Armstrong. The report should include:
 - a) details of what occurred;
 - b) details of when and where the occurrence took place;
 - c) any witness details and copies of any witness statements;
 - d) names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);
 - e) details of any former complaints made about the incident, including the date and to whom such complaint was made; and
 - f) an indication as to the desired outcome.

2. If the person accused of discriminatory behaviour is an employee, the management will regard the incident as a disciplinary issue and will follow any disciplinary procedure set out for employees or (if none exists) the statutory disciplinary procedure.
3. If the person accused of discriminatory behaviour is a non-employee, the management:
 - 3.1 will request that both parties to the complaint submit written evidence regarding the incident(s);
 - 3.2 may decide (at its sole discretion) to uphold or dismiss the complaint without holding a hearing;
 - 3.3 may (at its sole discretion) hold a hearing (whether or not such a hearing is requested by either party) at which both parties will be entitled to attend and present their case;
 - 3.4 will have the power to impose any one or more of the following sanctions on any person found to be in breach of any policy, (including the Equality Policy):
 - a) warn as to future conduct;
 - b) suspend from future work with ReFocus;
 - 3.5 will provide both parties with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one (1) calendar month of such decision being made.
4. If the nature of the complaint is with regard to the management, the complainant has the right to report the discrimination or harassment directly to the relevant authority.

Terminologies and descriptors

Types of discrimination

There are three categories of discrimination: direct, indirect and positive:

- Direct discrimination is where a person, in a group of people with the same or similar circumstances, is treated less favourably than the others in the group because of their race, gender, disability or sexuality.
- Indirect discrimination occurs where the effect of certain requirements, provision or practices imposed by an organisation has an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other. Indirect discrimination generally occurs when a rule or condition, which is applied equally to everyone, can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group; the rule is to their advantage and it cannot be justified on other grounds.
- Positive discrimination is in favour of those who were formerly discriminated against, especially in the provision of social and educational facilities and employment opportunities.

ReFocus will ensure that staff and clients are not discriminated against on grounds of:

- race, colour, ethnic group or national origin
- gender or marital status
- disability
- sexuality or sexual orientation
- age
- employment status
- actual/suspected HIV/AIDS
- religion and faith
- unrelated criminal offences/ex-offenders (subject to any legal or public interest constraints)
- responsibilities for children or dependents

Harassment can be described as inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact, which may cause offence i.e. mental or physical anxiety or hurt to an individual:

- It may be related to gender, race disability, sexuality, age, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of an individual.
- Under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 1994, harassment was made a criminal offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to six months.

Victimisation can be described as treating an individual less favourably than one would treat others because the individual has made a complaint of discrimination, given evidence about such a complaint or raised a concern under the Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998.

'Positive action' refers to a number of methods designed to counteract the effects of discrimination and to help eradicate stereotyping. It can be initiatives or activities that attempt to redress imbalances by providing extra help, doing things in a different way or promoting opportunities in targeted places and to targeted groups. Under this broad meaning, positive action may include actions such as the introduction of discriminatory selection procedures, and training programmes or policies aimed at preventing sexual harassment. An example of positive action being taken is the employment of a female coach to lead a session aimed at women, to specifically encourage uptake and participation by female players.

Prejudice is literally pre-judging someone. It is usually led by negative, irrational feelings, resulting from preconceived attitudes and opinions.

Stereotyping is grouping or labelling people because they are members of a particular 'visible' group, and assuming that they have particular traits that are considered to be characteristics of that group.

Dignity is about respectful, responsible, fair and humane behaviour, something that is reflected in the constitution.

Disadvantage is where, as a result of discrimination, an individual or group is deprived of some or all resources and opportunities. This may affect people directly or indirectly.

Social exclusion is when people or areas suffer from one or a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, high crime environments or lack of facilities.