

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN ACTION POLICY**

### **1 Scope**

This policy applies to all Lifeworks' staff (including temporary staff and contracted staff), volunteers, trustees, people who use our services (and their families/ carers) and other external organisations/ third parties that provide services to the charity.

### **2 Defining Equality and Diversity**

When Lifeworks refers to equality and diversity, it includes the equality strands used by the Equality and Human Rights Commission which include the Equality Act 2010 as well as the Human Rights Act 1998.

Equality and diversity is more than just equal access to participation - it should include social and educational inclusion as well.

By definition we believe that the right to be included means that everyone should:

- Have an equal right to learn and develop
- Be able to participate equally in activities
- Be given the opportunity to communicate in their preferred format
- Have their individual needs known and met
- Feels safe and know that they belong
- Is valued as a unique individual and
- Feels strong and confident about their identity

### **3 Lawful Practice**

The Equality Act 2010 protects users from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for Lifeworks Charity are:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity and race
- Gender (sex)
- Gender Identity and reassignment
- Pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships

### **4 Lifeworks' Commitment & Vision**

At Lifeworks, we are committed to promoting equality and human rights values, recognising and valuing diversity and working inclusively. We are committed to making sure everyone who uses our services and works for us has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and has the experience of feeling included, respected and valued for who they are, regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation as well as socio-economic status.

Lifeworks is committed to providing an equal environment which eliminates victimisation, discrimination and intolerance for all staff and people who use our service. It does this by providing equal opportunities for all and championing anti-discriminatory practice as well as employment and advancement opportunities for all individuals (where appropriate).

We will actively manage and promote equality and diversity among staff, volunteers, parents, people who use our services and partners. See our individualised commitments (Appendix 1-3 attached to this policy)

**'Equality and Diversity in Action' - For People Who Use Our Services (Appendix 1)**

**'Equality and Diversity in Action' - For Our Staff and Volunteers (Appendix 2)**

**'Equality and Diversity in Action' - Working With Our Partners (Appendix 3)**

Our vision includes:

- Treating people with equal value
- Recognising and respecting difference
- Fostering positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- Observing good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- Aiming to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that may already exist
- Consulting and involving widely

## **5 How Will This Be Achieved?**

### **5.1 Equality and Diversity in Employment**

Lifeworks will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Employment with the charity will be based on merit, qualifications and abilities. Lifeworks will not condone discrimination in employment or related practices on the basis of any characteristics protected by law or otherwise. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. 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.

Any candidate with a disability will not be excluded unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to perform a duty that is intrinsic to the role, having taken into account reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of his/her disability.

## 5.2 Equality and Diversity for People Who Use Our Service

Lifeworks is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively in all our planning and operations. We will maintain these principles in everything that we do and this will help to define our actions, behaviours and practices – as an employer and service provider.

We are against all forms of discrimination and intolerance in our workplaces, in our service settings and at any events which we organise. Removing and reducing any barriers and inequalities of access is one of our main aims, and we will work proactively to achieve this.

## 6 Promoting and Communicating Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity information will be made available to existing staff, volunteers, visitors, trustees and people who use our service to keep them up-to-date.

For employees/ volunteers this will take the form of e-learning / internal or external training /CPD/ company updates depending on the individual requirements of the staff. It will use various methods in order to take into account different learning styles, changing demographics and work patterns of the ensuring staff are well trained and well informed.

### 6.2 Training

#### 6.2.1 Staff

Equality and diversity is covered during the Lifeworks' Initial Induction (first five days) where a new starter is given an overview of this policy and required to sign an acknowledgement of having read and understood it. They will receive an explanation of Lifeworks approach to equality, why is important and what their role and responsibilities are.

New starters (and staff identified as needing to refresh their skills) are then required to complete Lifeworks' core programme which contains a module on 'Equality, Inclusion and Anti-discriminatory Practice', which requires a staff member to provide evidence that they understand, and can demonstrate that they have met, the required criteria. They are supported in their work by CPD

learning activities and a designated supervisor to help them complete their programme in a timely fashion, to a satisfactory standard and with the benefit of a knowledgeable mentor's experience in all aspects of best practice.

We will provide training to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work at Lifeworks, to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the 'Dignity at Work' (Anti-Harassment and Anti-bullying) Policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. Lifeworks will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

Lifeworks will also ensure that staff and other adults as appropriate receive information about how to identify bullying, work to prevent bullying and work with bullying issues as per our 'Countering Bullying Policy' for those who use our services

#### 6.1.2 Managers

Lifeworks will provide training in Equality and Diversity, and Safer Recruitment (as per our Safer Recruitment Policy) to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equality and diversity issues are likely to arise. This will enable them to embed the policy into practice and be able to deal effectively with any issues of grievance/ bullying or harassment/ or general concerns raised.

Our training programme will include:

- An explanation as to our approach to equality and why it is important
- The business case for equality
- The law and what this means to our practice
- The roles and responsibilities of staff in making the policy work
- Our policy for dealing with bullying and harassment
- Written materials to reinforce training
- Specialist guidance for staff who recruit, select, appraise etc.
- The chance for staff to raise concerns.

#### 6.1.3 People Who Use Our Service

Lifeworks requires the same adherence to the policy as from the staff. The information from the policy must be communicated in a way that all service users understand. As per Section 2 'Defining Equality and Diversity' the individual should be given the opportunity to communicate in their preferred format be it verbal, audio, written or picture form etc.

#### 6.1.4 Other Communications

Equality and Diversity is further embedded into supervisions /team meetings /appraisals as a regular agenda item to enable our commitment to be in the forefront of people's minds.

In line with the Supervision Policy of Lifeworks, all staff will receive supervision on a 4-6 weekly basis. This will include discussing any specific equality and diversity issues that have arisen in the work place and/or service delivery.

Staff, visitors and people who use our service (where appropriate) will be provided with an Equality and Diversity leaflet which gives them a version of the policy to recap the principle points.

Where required we will provide this information in alternative formats e.g. large print.

## **7 Communicating Expectations**

### 7.1 Employer Roles and Responsibilities

See Appendix 2 - 'Equality and Diversity in Action' - For Our Staff and Volunteers

Lifeworks is committed to equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against people who use our service.

This policy is intended to assist the company to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

The success of Lifeworks depends on its employees. Capitalising on what is unique about individuals and drawing on their different perspectives and experiences will add value to the way we work.

We will constantly strive to create a productive environment, representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

We all have a responsibility to embrace and support this vision and must continue to challenge behaviour and attitudes that prevent us from achieving this.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of committing to equality and diversity and ensuring equal opportunities in

employment. We have a separate 'Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy', concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

## 7.2 Expectations of Those Who Work for Us

Staff are required to assist Lifeworks in meeting our commitment to evidence equality and diversity in action.

In order to do we will expect staff:

- To recognise and challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice in the workplace
- To treat colleagues, children, young people, adults and families, with dignity respect and fairness and with regards to their human rights.
- To listen to the variety of views and opinions of others, and to constructively challenge those who express views and opinions which may show a lack of respect, sensitivity or regard to others.
- To acknowledge and celebrate diversity, with colleagues, children, young people, adults, families and partners.
- To ensure that there is equality of opportunity for service users to participate and be consulted, listened to and involved in activities designed to benefit them and improve the services they use.

You need to be aware that you could be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Lifeworks for any act of unlawful discrimination. If you commit serious acts of harassment you may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against other employees, people who use our service, visitors, or our service users are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

## 7.3 Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the 'Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy'.

We will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that we uphold. You won't be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

### 7.3 Complaints and Reporting

In line with Lifeworks' commitment to keep all children safe from harm, Lifeworks will ensure that all staff are aware of the Whistle-blowing policy and how allegations against staff and volunteers are to be managed. For more details please refer to the Whistle-blowing Policy.

As per our 'Countering Bullying Policy', people using the services of Lifeworks will be supported to report their experiences of bullying. Lifeworks will respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

As per our Safeguarding Policy 'Safeguarding is Everyone's' Business' - Without exception everyone has a right to be protected from harm and abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

### 7.4 Links to Other Policies

Our Behaviour that Challenges Policy works in conjunction with this policy meaning that any interventions or actions must take into account any needs arising from race, gender, age, religion and belief, language, communication, sensory impairment, disability and sexuality.

## **8 Engaging Stakeholders**

We will communicate regularly, through various forums, with our stakeholders to ascertain whether we being proactive in our commitment to inclusion and participation. Any feedback will be monitored, reviewed and actioned where appropriate.

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve: Staff, volunteers, trustees, partner agencies, people who use our services and their families.

## **9 Measuring, Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

### 9.1 Current and prospective staff, volunteers and trustees

Lifeworks will monitor composition as far as gender, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, age, religion or belief, marital status and sexual orientation of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in

accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the organisation will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 9.2 People Who Use Our Services

Lifeworks will monitor the age, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, religion or belief and sexual orientation composition of people who use our services and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. This data will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on protected characteristics or socio-economic factors.

## 9.3 On-going Training

We will monitor the outcomes of training and development to ensure its effectiveness so that trustees, managers, staff and service users understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.

## 10 Acting on Data

Lifeworks will set robust targets and will use data to monitor, analyse and improve engagement and performance by different groups of people engaged within the charity.

By monitoring, measuring and reviewing data this information will help us to:

- Develop and improve our policies and practices
- Build and maintain equality of opportunity for a diverse group of staff, volunteers and people who use our service across our organisation
- Promote the appreciation of and respect for diversity in the workplace
- Demonstrate our commitment to promoting equality and valuing and respecting diversity in all that we do as an employer and service provider.

This data will then be communicated to stakeholders via different methods such as parents' forums, training, Board of Trustee and staff meetings and supervisions.



## **11 References**

ACAS (2011). *Delivering Equality and Diversity*. [Online] Available from - [http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/l/e/Acas\\_Delivering\\_Equality\\_and\\_Diversity\\_%28Nov\\_11%29-accessible-version-Apr-2012.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/l/e/Acas_Delivering_Equality_and_Diversity_%28Nov_11%29-accessible-version-Apr-2012.pdf) [Assessed: 12/02/2015]

*Equality Act 2010*

*Human Rights Act 1998*

**Appendix 1 - 'Equality and Diversity in Action' –**

**For People Who Use Our Services**

**Lifeworks' Principles:**

Lifeworks is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively in all our planning and operations. We will maintain these principles in everything that we do and this will help to define our actions, behaviours and practices – as an employer and service provider.

We are against all forms of discrimination and intolerance in our workplaces, in our service settings and at any events which we organise. Removing and reducing any barriers and inequalities of access is one of our main aims, and we will work proactively to achieve this.

**You can expect from us:**

- A welcoming and safe environment in all our services and events
- Staff and volunteers who show respect, recognise and appreciate people as individuals, listen and learn from the views and opinions of children, young people, adults and families/ partners.
- Events and activities that provide an equal opportunity for participation and which seek to educate, inform, offer fun, and contribute to better health and wellbeing.
- Sensitivity and understanding when exploring, or addressing, difficult or challenging issues, that may be linked to someone's race, gender, gender identity, age, disability, religion or belief, culture, sexual orientation, community background, health and wellbeing.

We will work constructively and sensitively with children, young people, adults and families to:

- Encourage children, young people and adults to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from themselves, and include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality, and equal opportunities.
- Act in ways that show respect and regard for themselves, each other and the staff and volunteers who work with them.
- Enable them to take responsibility for how they express views and opinions that may be deemed as offensive to others, and respect that our staff and volunteers also have a responsibility to challenge those views and opinions for the benefit of all the people who use our service.
- Celebrate and embrace diversity in ways which are relevant and meaningful to them.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that individual medical, cultural, and dietary needs of children, young people and adults are met. We also aim to help them to learn about a range of cultural approaches to respect and value any differences in others.

### **Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity monitoring**

We will work proactively to measure and monitor the people who work for us, and those who use our services, in order to identify and remove any barriers to our employment and provision. This monitoring helps us achieve our targets and also to understand the people who use our services in respect to their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Ethnic origin
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The information we collect helps us to:

- Develop and improve our services
- Develop and improve our policies, procedures and protocols
- Promote the appreciation of and respect for all individuals regardless of their background
- Demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality, appreciating and respecting diversity, and human rights values, though all we do as an employer and service provider.

**Appendix 2 - 'Equality and Diversity in Action' –**

**For Our Staff and Volunteers**

**Lifeworks' Principles:**

Lifeworks believes that the success of Lifeworks depends on its employees. Capitalising on what is unique about individuals and drawing on their different backgrounds, knowledge, experiences, abilities, perspectives and skills will add value to the way we work and enable us to deliver high quality services to the broadest range of children, young people and adults.

**You can expect from us:**

- A safe, welcoming and inclusive workplace culture, where individuals are appreciated, respected and listened to.
- Professional and personal development activities which are equally accessible to everyone.
- Support, guidance and training on equality and anti-discriminatory practice as well as challenging discrimination, prejudice, bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- A range of working practices that are accessible to all staff regardless of their sexual orientation, race, gender, gender identity, disability, age, religion or belief and/or background.

**We expect from you:**

- To put the people who use our services first, and so work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that individual medical, cultural, and dietary needs of children, young people and adults are met.
- To treat colleagues, children, young people, adults and families, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- To listen to and value the variety of views and opinions of others, but constructively challenge those who express views and opinions which may show a lack of respect, sensitivity or regards to others.
- To encourage children, young people and adults to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from themselves, and include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.
- To have knowledge, and celebrate diversity, with colleagues, children, young people, adults and families.
- To ensure that there is equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice to ensure that all children, young people, adults and families are able to participate and be consulted, listened to and involved in activities that are designed to benefit them and improve the services they use.
- To recognise and challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.

## **Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity Monitoring**

We will work proactively to measure and monitor the people who work for us, and those who use our services, in order to identify and remove any barriers to our employment and provision. This monitoring helps us achieve our targets and also to understand the people who use our services in respect to their:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic Origin
- Disability
- Marital Status
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

We ask all applicants and our staff to complete an Equal Opportunity and Diversity monitoring form. This information will be collected and stored in accordance to our Data Protection Policy.

The information we collect helps us to:

- Develop and improve our services
- Develop and improve our policies, procedures and protocols
- Promote the appreciation of and respect for diversity in the workplace.
- Demonstrate commitment to promoting equality, appreciating and respecting diversity, and human rights values, through all we do as an employer and service provider.

**Appendix 3 - 'Equality and Diversity in Action':**

**Working with Our Partners**

**Lifeworks' Principles:**

**You can expect from us:**

- High quality services that are accessible to a broad range of people with learning disabilities.
- A range of added value benefits that enhance our services to meet the needs of a diverse group of children, young people and adults who use our services.
- Staff and volunteers who are confident and competent to manage and promote equality, diversity and human rights values.
- Evidence of good and best practices in all areas of at work to demonstrate the promotion of equality and anti-discriminatory practice, and the management of diversity.
- Evidence of the positive impact that our work has on the lives of the children, young people, adults and families who to use our services.

**Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity Monitoring**

We will work proactively to measure and monitor the people who work for us, and those who use our services, in order to identify and remove any barriers to our employment and provision.

This monitoring helps us achieve our targets and also to understand the people who work for us in respect to their:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic Origin
- Disability
- Marital Status
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

This monitoring helps us achieve our targets and also to understand the people who use our services in respect to their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender

*PromisedLand Academy*

*Reap the Rewards... Psalm 127*

- Ethnic origin
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The information we collect helps us to:

- Develop and improve our services
- Develop and improve our policies, procedures and protocols
- Promote the appreciation of and respect for diversity in the workplace.
- Demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality, appreciating and respecting diversity, and human rights values, though all we do as an employer and service provider.

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