



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Document history

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Policy statement: Sew Positive is a charity committed to promoting diversity and equal opportunities in the voluntary sector and the community it serves. We have a fundamental belief in ensuring equal opportunities in all areas of our work. This policy applies to all aspects of Sew Positive's relationship with its staff, volunteers and participants.

We recognise that we are all different in a variety of ways and that such differences should be respected. We will work to create an environment where everyone feels valued for their individual talents and where their skills and competencies are fully utilised.

Equality Act compliance

Sew Positive will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Sew Positive will oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes, but is not limited to, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

A social model of impairment

Sew Positive endorses a social model of impairment in which the barriers that prevent any individual playing a part in society are the problem, not the individual. This model requires society to remove the barriers in order that all people have equality.

Direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances. Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which adversely affects one particular group considerably more than another and cannot be strictly justified. Victimisation is treating someone less favourably because they have raised a complaint or concern about discrimination. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, such as sexist jokes, racist banter or inappropriate comments related to disability.

As well as being related to a protected characteristic, the conduct must have the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Sew Positive will work with its participants to combat all direct or indirect forms of discrimination, victimisation or harassment and take positive steps to remove barriers to participation and achieve equality of opportunity. Our aim is that all people are able to play an active part in their communities and are able to access the support they need from the voluntary sector.

We will work to achieve equality in all areas of the organisation including its structures, policies, employment practices and delivery of services. We aim to involve all parts of the voluntary and community sector in identifying priorities and needs to ensure that all voices are heard in reflecting voluntary sector responses to local initiatives.

We will develop, implement and review strategies to promote equality throughout all areas of our activity and spheres of influence.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to

- Sew Positive services and contracts
- Sew Positive staff
- Sew Positive volunteers
- The trustee board
- Any sub-committees
- Participants.

Volunteering

Although there is no statutory obligation under equality legislation we recognise a clear moral obligation to promote fairness and equality in volunteering and value all individuals and their diverse and unique identity and background.

Participants

Sew Positive requires participants to agree with and promote the principles of this Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. Agreement must be confirmed before the participant's application will be considered. Should participants fail to comply with this policy, Sew Positive will work with them to implement good practice. We reserve the right to suspend or withdraw a member's participation for serious or persistent breaches of this policy.

Activities and services

Sew Positive will work to ensure that all its services to participants are provided in a way that promotes awareness of the rights of individuals and is committed against unlawful discrimination of those using the service or the public.

We will prioritise activities and services that support groups that are most disadvantaged or traditionally experience discrimination and have poor access to resources.

A community development approach is at the heart of all Sew Positive does, working to empower individuals and give them the skills, confidence and opportunities to achieve their own vision and objectives.

We will take steps to ensure that services are fully inclusive and actively address barriers to access and participation. Sew Positive will use simple language when providing information and activities. Information will be provided on request in a variety of formats to meet the needs of individual users.

Where possible, activities and services will use venues that are accessible to all.

Wherever possible, services and activities will be provided free to participants or at low cost to ensure they can be accessed by those most in need.

Implementation

Sew Positive will create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring day to day implementation of the policy. Individual staff and volunteers will consider how the policy affects their own areas of work and tell the Chief Executive Officer about any issues or training needs that they find.

This Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will be explained to all staff, volunteers and trustees as part of Sew Positive induction procedures.

Staff, volunteers and trustees will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. All staff, trustees and volunteers should understand they, as well as Sew Positive, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their engagement, against fellow employees and volunteers, service users and the public.

Sew Positive will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by anyone in the course of our activities. For staff and those paid by Sew Positive such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under our grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints, if proven, could amount to gross misconduct. For volunteers, such acts will be addressed via the volunteer problem solving policy in the volunteer handbook.

We will make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, volunteers and trustees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised. This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

Monitoring and review

The Sew Positive Trustee board will monitor and review this policy on an annual basis and consider it when setting strategy.