

Set 2

InfoSheet 2.4

Recruitment and Selection

Developing an Equal Opportunities Policy

When you start to develop your equal opportunities policy, a number of key questions need to be addressed:

- Is it being developed in full consultation with volunteers, staff and service users?
- How will you ensure that volunteers have a shared ownership of the policy?
- Who else do you need to consult with?
- How will you ensure that the policy is specifically relevant to your organisation?
- How will you enable agencies that you work with to become aware of your policy?
- At what point and how will the policy be reviewed and checked for effectiveness?
- How will the policy be managed and co-ordinated?
- How will you persuade others that the equal opportunities policy is a good idea?

Framework for developing a policy

Equal Opportunities Policies need to be integral to the running of a group or organisation. This section looks at the issues that need to be taken into account when developing and implementing a policy.

- Where and how did the policy originate?
- Whose idea was it?

Needs assessment

It may be useful for a group or organisation to gather and or access information about:

- The size, diversity and make-up of the population
- General populations perception about volunteering
- The barriers to their participation in volunteering
- Their needs and expectations
- The degree to which existing volunteers reflect the make-up of the population
- How well the group or organisation networks with other voluntary and statutory groups and organisations
- How the group or organisation is seen by local communities and key agencies
- How volunteering could be better sold

Statement of Intent

This element of the policy is an explanation of how your group/organisation designed and developed the equal opportunities policy. It should say something about how the policy came about and how was involved in its development.

Aims and Objectives

You could state something along the lines of: 'This group/organisation is committed to equal opportunities and anti-discrimination in its policies and practices. It will not discriminate against groups or individuals on the grounds of gender, sex, race, colour, whether they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, language, age, marital status, child care arrangements, carer status, disability, HIV status, physical or mental health, offender background, appearance, class or economic status, trade union membership or political affiliation.'

The group/organisation will ensure that its offices are fully accessible and encourage and persuade its key partners to do likewise. The group/organisation is committed to making adequate provision for child-care and crèche to enable staff members and volunteers to participate in all its activities (*you will really need to think about this – many groups can't provide childcare or childcare expenses because of resource limitations. See Set 6, InfoSheet 6.1).*

Scope

Example: 'This group/organisation will take positive to promote equality of opportunity and the involvement of all members of the community in its activities. We will strive to create an environment where there is dialogue and a culture of anti-discriminatory practices'.

Public Images

Example: 'This policy will be publicly displayed in this group's or organisation's offices and distributed to: (your key partner agencies, volunteers (potential and existing ones), potential job applicants, local community organisations)'

Example: 'This group/organisation will ensure that any publicity or promotional materials that it produces will not play on stereotypes or prejudices and strive to promote positive, anti-discriminatory messages. Similarly the office environment will be free of discriminatory and oppressive imagery and culture.'

Paid Staff

Example:

All staff will be recruited through the use of:

- An open advertisement in the press including minority press.
- A declared recruitment procedure - job description, job specification, representative shortlisting and interview panel.
- Proper contracts and terms and conditions of employment
- Provision will be made for job sharing, maternity cover, paternity/maternity leave and carer's leave.

Volunteers

Example: 'This group/organisation will ensure that all volunteers and others involved in its work follow and implement the equal opportunities policy. We are committed to ensuring that all volunteers are treated equally and given equal opportunities to contribute to the organisation. We are committed to ensuring that we recruit volunteers from all sections of the population.'

Development and Training

Example:

Processes will be built in to allow all concerned to be involved in policy design and implementation and offered the following support and training to do so:

- Induction
- In-service training

Training to key partner organisations and local community groups.

Service Delivery

Example:

This group/organisation will ensure that it works with a wide range of local partners and groups and ensure that its clients are drawn from a diverse base that reflects the nature of local communities.

External Relations

Example:

This group/organisation will strive to network and forge effective partnerships with organisations outside its immediate environment. This will include links with local community organisations, religious bodies, local authority departments and community and voluntary organisations. We will strive to become an integral part of the local community.

Administrative Systems - Code of Conduct

This group/organisation will undertake to develop a 'Code of Conduct', for all staff, volunteers and committee members which will specify acceptable and appropriate forms of behaviour, language and imagery whilst on the group's or organisation's business. We will introduce grievance and disciplinary procedures to deal with incidents of discrimination.

Implementation Plan

This group/organisation will set up an Equal Opportunities Policy working group that will be responsible for designing a programme of action to carry through this policy which will set out:

- Targets and goals
- Training implications
- Resource implications
- Monitoring criteria
- Monitoring and evaluation processes
- Review procedures and time scales
- Positive action
- Teamwork, supervision and appraisal implications
- Reporting structures
- Volunteer, community and key partner involvement

Policy Management

Example:

The managerial responsibility for this Equal Opportunities Policy will lie with the management committee of this group/organisation; they will receive a formal report every three months about the progress made towards the equal opportunities targets.

Resources

Example:

This group/organisation will ensure that money and other resources will be made available to make this policy real and effective.

Review and Evaluation

Example:

This Equal Opportunities Policy will be comprehensively reviewed and evaluated two years from when it was first introduced.