



For better
mental health

Mind Equalities Statement

Equalities Statement

Equality and diversity are essential to Mind's mission. As a whole organisation, we will seek to implement this priority in all our work. We are committed to promoting equal access to our services and consulting with others – staff, volunteers, people with experience of mental distress and knowledge of mental health services, all our partners and local communities – in our working methods.

As an equal opportunities and equal access organisation we will provide and promote equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment regardless of Individual differences between people. We aspire to greater diversity in order to reflect the community we serve, and to ensure that our policies, services and products truly reflect their needs, and we have established diversity as a key value. We know that significant business advantages flow from being in tune with the diverse needs of our service users, employees, suppliers and partners, and their communities.

When we experience mental distress, or have mental health problems to deal with, we may all potentially experience discrimination. Mind recognises that people cannot be put into single categories, and that we may all identify and define ourselves in many different ways. Mind will ensure that we always recognise the complexity of people's identity, and will work to ensure that no aspects of a person's life are ignored on account of excluding categorisation or labelling. We acknowledge that some of us can experience discrimination on more than one count. This experience, often extreme and always unacceptable, needs to be understood and brought into Mind to strengthen our campaigning and policy work and to inform the services we offer. We will never give up learning from these experiences, challenging discrimination, and campaigning for better mental health.

We respect everyone's experience and seek to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of all our work. We are committed to working with all who can help us achieve our mission – as staff, trustees, volunteers, members of other organisations and of the general public - regardless of whether they may be men, women, transgendered, lesbian, gay, bisexual, disabled, and of their ethnic origin, race, nationality, immigration status, religion or belief, age, social class, educational qualifications, income, location, lifestyle, and of any record of offences, and any other personal characteristic or preference.

In order to monitor how well we do, we will review our organisational performance annually, including how successful we have been in implementing our equality and diversity standards and work, particularly in relation to people with experience of mental distress.

We also recognise that whilst there are many examples of good practice throughout the whole organisation, we need to do more to identify and share this within and across our departments and with our partners. In this way we will become more confident about what we do, and develop even better approaches than those we have at present.

This statement is supported by a number of appendices relating to implementation.

Mind Equalities Statement Appendices

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Appendix 1 **Mind services, functions and policies**

Mind provides a wide range of services, products and benefits of which we are proud. These include all the information and advice services, printed or website publications, fundraising events, and Mind's support to networks, and in particular the local Mind associations in their work within local communities.

We will take practical steps to ensure that: the services we directly offer are fully accessible to, and recognise the specific needs and preferences of, those who often experience discrimination. Advice given to, and requirements placed upon, all parts of Mind's network in England and Wales will include the practical recognition of inequality and the actions needed to combat discrimination and promote positive action.

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Mental health policy and campaigning

One of Mind's core aims is to influence policy in the best interests of those of us who experience mental distress or face mental health problems. We draw on what we know in conducting our policy and campaign work in England and Wales – with the United Kingdom Government in Westminster and the Welsh Assembly, while maintaining an awareness of work in the rest of the United Kingdom. Always, and in all possible ways, the experiences of those people traditionally discriminated against will be sought, validated with respect and used to inform better practice in all Mind's services, campaign and lobby for change.

We campaign on a wide range of issues, reflecting the breadth of mental health provision, and try to use our influence to ensure that issues relating to mental health needs are addressed as effectively as possible. We aim to provide our service users with platforms for speaking out for themselves as well as lobbying with them and on their behalf. We are aware that we need to build more contacts with users from minority ethnic communities in order to ensure that serious account is taken by decision-makers on the issues they may present.

We do this knowing that there are many differences which can affect people's rights and needs, including age, race, gender, status, disability, sexual orientation, culture, family income or circumstances, language, religion, location, or any other difference, and in any combination. In all our lobbying and campaigning we aim to model and advance the principle of equal rights for all. We will continue to work with our partners in developing better links

with all minority communities. Positive action will be taken (e.g. outreach, collaborative working) to develop Mind's role in changing attitudes and practices which result from stereotyping and prejudice

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Fundraising, marketing and sales, and communications

Mind greatly values its donors and supporters and those who give us public support. We seek to develop where possible mutual relationships within diverse communities in England and Wales. We want others to know about our work and to be informed of issues and services relevant to our mission, and the priorities we have in carrying it out.

Our fundraising, marketing and communications work involves a range of partners and activities that will support and promote the diversity of the people with whom we work. It will be an ongoing priority to ensure that all communications reflect these equalities and diversity objectives.

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Volunteers and service user participation

We value the contribution to the work of Mind of volunteers, trustees, members of advisory panels and those who help our partner organisations. We want mental health service users and survivors in the community to be able to relate to those who bring their diverse life experience, skills and knowledge to Mind's work.

We want everyone who helps us to value this diversity as much as we do. In our support of participants and contributors we will endeavour to communicate our values and the standards we expect in relation to our equality and diversity work, as well as providing the support needed to utilise this diverse resource. We will continue to work on enhancing service user participation, from all sections of the community, in the work of Mind

The role of trustees is to establish a vision and strategic direction for Mind, including developing guiding principles for all that we do. The commitment of trustees to equality and diversity is therefore key, and is incorporated into the framework of priorities within which their work is undertaken.

Our recruitment of trustees is open and robust, to ensure that we are able to attract individuals from varying professions and backgrounds. We aim to ensure that trustees and all stakeholders both reflect and complement a diverse workforce and service user base.

Business support systems

We recognise that our staff and internal departments have varied communication and support needs/requirements in order to work effectively. Our aim is to enable all those who work for us to have access to systems which help them to be well informed, equipped and supported to contribute to sustaining an effective and efficient organisation.

We will aim to ensure, where possible, that investments, resources and the goods and services of suppliers chosen, which can all contribute to our positive work with service users, are also managed in line with this equalities priority and Mind's values and ethics.

We will take into account access needs when setting up meeting venues or office bases and ensure that new and existing projects not only promote the brand in terms of signage, but promote equal access. We also ensure our Information Technology provision (including our website and intranet) is accessible, promotes safe standards and complies with equality legislation and best practice for all.

Employment

As an important charitable employer of staff in the field of mental health in England and Wales, we are committed to developing a diverse workforce because we believe this best meets the needs of the people we aim to support and serve. We recognise that people work in different ways and bring different strengths to our work. Our workforce will always include a valued cadre of staff who themselves have experience of mental distress, and carers.

Our work and organisation benefits from a workforce which brings a range of life experiences, cultural and community backgrounds and past professional lives. We affirm these differences, and are committed to developing workplaces which respect individuals and value this diversity, including recognition that a minority of Mind staff work from home or small rented offices, separate from the headquarters in Cardiff and London and need to be integrated into all work processes. Mind will seek to provide supportive mechanisms, in terms of induction, training and personal support, to enable this group of staff to work on an equal level with staff who do not have this personal experience.

We will enable employees to develop skills and knowledge to reach their own potential and to be effective within the roles they perform. We are committed to a fair employment and equal pay policy, and to supporting managers in managing employee performance in relation to equality and diversity issues. Our management development programme will take this into account and encourage learning and personal development in these areas. We will support managers in dealing swiftly and appropriately with discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace or any other act motivated by prejudice.

We aim to develop over time a diversity champions approach so that equality and diversity issues can be highlighted by individuals located in all departments, and best practice can be developed and shared across them.

In employment and management practices Mind intends that a positive environment should exist for all employees, with practical conditions and terms which promote the intentions of this equalities statement. Further policy development relating to employment will cover:

- equal opportunities in application, selection and recruitment procedures
- staff audit
- ongoing monitoring and targets,
- pay and terms and conditions;
- promotion; development and access to training, management training and development,
- appraisals and objectives for staff,
- role for staff groups - champions, LGB, BME, service users,
- the role of the trade union in promoting equality,
- disability – Mind’s values and promoting the social model of disability, reasonable adjustments and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Please note that Mind also has policies which recognise the need for employees to balance their work and domestic commitments and has the following policies and procedures to assist employees: adoption leave, compassionate leave, dependents leave, flexible working, maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, religious observance leave and facilities, and Mind provides additional days of leave at key family holiday times.

Positive action will be taken to ensure that the intentions of the equal opportunities policy are realised through all procedures and practices of recruitment and staff development.

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Monitoring

We will continuously assess our progress in relation to equalities and diversity objectives, by monitoring numerically and qualitatively the extent of this. We will develop ongoing measures for the extent of services’ reach all sections of the community, and levels of satisfaction with the service offered amongst different groups. We will monitor improvements in diversity in the workforce at all stages in the recruitment and career development process; and we will seek to assess the extent that Mind personnel, whether as trustees, volunteers or staff, are able to contribute to the advancement of diversity through all projects and performance.

We expect all managers to take a full role in the advancement of equalities and diversity in employment, the provision of services and the advancement of better mental health. This work will be supported by the development of means of ensuring that diversity and equality is an integral element of Mind’s priorities. Training, management procedures, the development of an internal network of champions, and new performance indicators will be essential in bringing this policy to full effect.

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Appendix 8

Status of this Policy Statement

This policy should be read in conjunction with other papers that relate to diversity and equalities objectives in the work of Mind, and current action plans that outline ongoing work

in this area. The statement is a basis for action and should be revised and improved in the light of changes and new developments. Mechanisms for monitoring its effectiveness will be devised.

This policy takes full account of all the UK legal requirements relating to employment, goods and services which outlaw direct or indirect discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, sex, disability, religion, and sexual orientation and victimisation of any person who has asserted their rights under the relevant legislation. Mind will also incorporate references to age in any consideration of discrimination, recognising that discrimination does occur and will be subject to legislation in 2006*. Mind recognises that not all areas of unacceptable discrimination are covered by legislation and will always seek to be in the vanguard of organisations seeking to end unfair discrimination wherever it occurs and this statement is intended to reflect that aim.

This statement replaces all previous statements, and should only be amended with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

** Subject to Parliamentary approval the age regulations legislation will come into force on 1 October 2006, after which this sentence should be deleted and the word age added to the list in the first sentence of this section.*