

## Turn2us

### Equality and Diversity Policy

#### Contents

1. Policy Statements
2. Introduction
3. Definitions
4. Aims and Objectives
5. Policy Implementation: Expectations
6. Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion
7. Policy Implementation: Harassment
8. Policy Implementation: Training
9. Policy Implementation: Service Delivery
10. Policy Implementation: Awareness Raising Activities
11. Policy Implementation: Involvement
12. Policy Enforcement: Grievance Procedure
13. Policy Enforcement: Disciplinary Procedure
14. Monitoring

#### 1. Policy Statements

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- 1.1. Turn2us understands and appreciates the benefits of a diverse workforce which will maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and bring benefit to individuals and communities.
  - 1.2. Turn2us encourages all people it works with and for to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with fairness and respect and that their contribution will be valued.
  - 1.3. The way we work and learn within Turn2us reflects the mission, values and objectives of Turn2us and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.
  - 1.4. Turn2us will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to individuals to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in Turn2us' work.
  - 1.5. Turn2us will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers, to individuals.

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- 1.6. Turn2us is an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No individual should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, marital status or caring responsibility, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, political, philosophical or religious beliefs or non beliefs, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, trade union activities. Nor should anyone be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. These principles apply to recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, benefits, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment and service provision.
  - 1.7 Turn2us urges staff and volunteers to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals or groups of individuals.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 Turn2us strives for high standards both as an employer and as a provider of services. In so doing, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.
- 2.2 This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for Turn2us to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation.
- 2.3 Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action.
- 2.4 Turn2us' aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle issues where they arise. Turn2us is committed to reviewing this policy on an annual basis. Through our services, publications, communications activities, interaction with our stakeholders and other activities, Turn2us will ensure those we work with know our statements of policy.
- 2.5 Turn2us will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, remedial action will be taken to ensure improvement.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Equal Opportunities** ensure that policies, procedures and practices within Turn2us do not discriminate against the people within it or individuals using its services. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of who they are; their background; or their lifestyle.
- 3.2. **Equality of Outcome** ensures that policies, procedures and practices within Turn2us recognise that not all groups start at the same point in life's race for achievement. Thus Turn2us, where possible, will ensure that we seek to re-dress social imbalances by actively targeting under-represented employees and service users.
- 3.3. **Diversity** ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to Turn2us and to the community. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative.

- 3.4. **Direct Discrimination** occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably than others. It is unlawful if that treatment is because of a “protected characteristic”. These cover age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious, philosophical or political beliefs or non-beliefs, sex and sexual orientation. Direct discrimination can also occur where an individual is “associated” with someone from one of these groups or is “perceived” to belong to one of these groups.
- 3.5. **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a requirement or condition is applied equally to persons of all groups but where a particular group is disadvantaged by being less able to comply with it. It is unlawful where it relates to individuals with “protected characteristics”. Examples: a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group or requiring applicants to have British qualifications.
- 3.6. **Victimisation** occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted their rights in employment or acted as a whistleblower. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.
- 3.7. **Harassment** is a form of direct discrimination. This can be repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an individual or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment can be unlawful where it relates to individuals with “protected characteristics” although the person claiming harassment does not have to be the recipient of the action. They may be a witness, for instance, to a sexually explicit joke which they overhear and which they find offensive. Employers can also be liable for acts of harassment caused by third parties.
- 3.8. **Positive Action** refers to measures taken to assist individuals who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures would normally take the form of additional training. Positive action can also be adopted to discriminate in favour of a minority candidate who is as qualified as another candidate for a role, if that group is under represented in the workplace.

#### 4. Aims and Objectives

4.1 The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- To ensure equal access to jobs and volunteer opportunities
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality, in particular the Equality Act 2010
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of individuals
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to Turn2us' work
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in Turn2us
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all Turn2us premises and services are accessible to all people
- To ensure that employment and advancement within the organisation is determined by objective criteria and personal merit.

#### 5. Policy Implementation: Expectations

5.1 Turn2us recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and Turn2us will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities.

5.2 Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Trustees. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to the Director. Turn2us believes that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality.

5.3 Turn2us expects individuals:

- To co-operate with measures introduced by Turn2us to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and non discrimination
- Not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other individual on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, marital status or caring responsibility, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, political, philosophical or religious beliefs or non beliefs, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, trade union activities, or for any other reason.
- To feel sufficiently confident to inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

5.4 Turn2us expects Line Managers:

- To ensure that accurate records of employment decisions are maintained and regular reviews of employment practices are carried out
- To ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with Turn2us' Grievance Policy and Procedure
- To ensure that individuals within their area are aware of their legal responsibilities, and the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy
- To promote actively the benefits of employee and participant diversity in employment, services and training.

## **6. Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion**

6.1 Turn2us strives to ensure that individuals within our organisation reflect the wider community.

6.2 Clear and accurate information on vacant posts should be available through advertisement, job descriptions, person specifications and interview. Vacancies should be advertised sufficiently widely to reach the broadest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external.

6.3 No recruitment material should imply any preferred group, unless an occupational requirement exists limiting a post to a particular group and being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

6.4 Applicants will be informed through all recruitment material of Turn2us' commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and the existence of this policy.

6.5 Person specifications may include justifiable 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements and recruitment processes may include assessments and tests. Care should be taken to ensure that these are not discriminatory and advice should be sought where necessary from the Human Resources department.

6.6 Any staff involved in shortlisting or interview panels will be suitably trained in equalities awareness. In addition, wherever practicable, shortlisting and interview panels will aim to reflect the diversity of the candidates and the wider community.

6.7 The short-listing and interview panels will not discriminate unfairly against individuals when making selections.

6.8 The interview panel must take extreme care not to ask discriminatory questions unrelated to the requirements of the job e.g. race, colour, nationality. All interview questions must be directly relating to the job profile and requirements of the person specification.

6.9 Individuals should be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs with their line managers through a process of regular support and annual appraisals.

6.10 Job titles that are discriminatory should not be used.

## **7. Policy Implementation: Harassment**

7.1 Turn2us defines harassment as behaviour which is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive and which cannot be objectively justified by the professional and/or working relationship between the individuals concerned.

7.2 Turn2us is opposed to harassment in any form and is committed to providing a working and learning environment which is free from harassment and in which the dignity of all individuals within Turn2us is respected.

7.3 Turn2us is committed to providing effective mechanisms for dealing with complaints of breaches of its Equality and Diversity Policy, so that individuals can feel confident in the knowledge that the organisation will deal with complaints seriously, promptly and impartially. Making a genuine complaint will not adversely affect a service user or a member of staff's prospects at Turn2us. Mechanisms are in place to bring forward and address complaints through informal and formal levels.

## **8. Policy Implementation: Training**

8.1 In line with the intentions of this policy, Turn2us will not discriminate in the provision of training courses/ opportunities.

8.2 Appropriate training will be provided to enable individuals to perform their jobs effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people.

8.3 Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for individuals.

## **9. Policy Implementation: Service Delivery**

9.1 Turn2us will strive to ensure that all of its services are accessible to diverse users and comply with good practice guidance for accessibility standards. The Turn2us website will comply with AA standard for web accessibility and pass a relevant disability accreditation standard, such as that from the Shaw Trust. The Turn2us website will include Welsh content and will be expanded to other community languages as need is identified and resourcing is made available. The Turn2us helpline will also provide a service for community languages. The helpline will have minicom availability.

## **10. Policy Implementation: Awareness Raising Activities**

10.1 Turn2us will promote its service, and the availability of benefits and grants, to diverse audiences in financial need. It will achieve this through a range of promotional activities and working in partnership with organisations that have access to diverse audiences. Turn2us materials will endeavour to represent and appeal to the full range of potential users and will be produced in English and Welsh, expanding to other community languages as and when need is identified and resourcing is made available.

10.2 Turn2us will seek to involve service users in its awareness raising activities, enabling their issues to be directed to key decision makers and influencers.

## **11. Policy Implementation: Involvement**

11.1 Turn2us will seek to involve users in all aspects of its governance and operations through direct involvement, research and user panels. Users' views will be taken into account in the review of plans and services.

## **12. Policy Enforcement: Grievance Procedure**

- a. Turn2us recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the organisation. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.
- b. Any staff member or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through Turn2us's established Grievance Procedure.
- c. Any service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Turn2us Director, who must report any such complaint to the Trustees. If the complaint is about the General Manager, this should be made through the Chair of the Elizabeth Finn Care Board of Trustees.
- d. Any job applicant who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the Turn2us Director or the Chair of the Elizabeth Finn Care Board of Trustees.

## **13. Policy Enforcement: Disciplinary Procedure**

- a. All incidents of direct discrimination are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- b. Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- c. Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with Turn2us' Harassment Procedure. Where there is a reasonable belief that an incident of victimisation or harassment has taken place, the issue will be dealt with under Turn2us' Disciplinary Procedure.
- d. Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment.
- e. Any volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from Turn2us' volunteer register.
- f. Any member of any Committee or working group of Turn2us found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave Turn2us.
- g. Any service user found to be in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from Turn2us.

## 15. Monitoring

- 15.1 Turn2us view the collection and analysis of data as vital in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on Turn2us' services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters. We will review employee turnover and act on information relating to reasons for leaving. Local and national data or statistics will be used to benchmark our performance. Any personal data of employees or other individuals will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Turn2us Confidentiality Policy.
- 15.2 The Elizabeth Finn Care Board of Trustees will review annually the equality of opportunity relating to Turn2us services. Recruitment and selection procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Turn2us Director who will report to the trustees. All aspects of personnel policies and procedures shall be kept under review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 15.3 In order to measure the commitment, progress and effectiveness of this policy, it will be reviewed as follows:
- The policy will be an agenda item at Turn2us team meetings
  - The trustees will undertake an annual policy review where all relevant parties will be encouraged to submit comments for consideration
  - The review recommendations will be presented to a trustee meeting for their comments and ratification.
- 15.4 Where it appears that there is or may have been a breach of the policy, the trustees will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken as appropriate.
- 15.5 If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of individuals or restricting service users, the trustees should take positive action to adjust the policy.

Adopted: September 2008

Reviewed/revised: April 2014

Review date: April 2015

Policy Owner: Turn2us Director.

The following related policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Handling Telephone Calls Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy