



GREENWICH WOMEN'S AID EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

PURPOSE:

To set out the approach of Greenwich Women's Aid (GWA) in relation to ensuring equality and diversity of opportunity for staff and service users in terms of employment and access to services and to provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice.

INTRODUCTION

This document contains a policy statement (Part One) and procedural guidance (Part Two).

PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

1. Greenwich Women's Aid (GWA) is committed to striving for equality and diversity in the provision of our services, the employment of staff, and our work with volunteers and Management Committee members.
2. GWA recognises that certain groups in society continue to be discriminated against. Our practices, however, will seek to ensure that women and children will not be discriminated against in any way, including on the grounds of their:
 - gender
 - age
 - disability
 - sexual orientation
 - racial origin
 - nationality
 - religion
 - cultural beliefs
3. GWA's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to categories of discrimination, as set out below:
 - **Direct discrimination** - where someone is treated less favourably than another on any of the grounds set out above.
 - **Indirect discrimination** - when a requirement or condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group as set out above. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
 - **Victimisation**
Occurs if a person is given less favourable treatment than others because she has exercised her rights under the policy or the relevant legislation.

- **Harassment**

Is defined as any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, directed at an individual, that is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient, and that might threaten an employee's job security or create an intimidating environment.

- **Institutional Discrimination**

Takes place when established policies, practices and procedures within an organisation have a discriminatory effect whether intentional or not.

4. GWA will adhere to the requirements and guidance contained in the following pieces of legislation (and any subsequent amendments to them) and in any other relevant legislation, in all of our work:

Legislative Requirements

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (and its amendments in 1986, 1999 and 2003)

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex or marital status, or to apply requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on people of a particular sex or marital status where these cannot be justified. It also incorporates indiscriminately advertising, sexual harassment, victimisation or to apply pressure to discriminate or aid discrimination by another person.

Equal Pay Act 1984

The Equal Pay Act was introduced to make it unlawful to offer different pay and conditions where women and men are doing the same or similar work or rated as equivalent in the same employment.

Race Relations Act 1976 (and its amendments in 2000)

This Act makes racial discrimination directly or indirectly unlawful in employment, training and related areas. It is illegal to apply conditions or requirements which have a disproportional disadvantageous effect on a particular racial group and which cannot be justified on non-racial grounds. The act defines racial discrimination as discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

This Act builds on and extends earlier disability discrimination legislation, principally the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against current or prospective employees with disabilities, and people who have had a disability. These provisions apply to acts of discrimination such as detrimental treatment or dismissal in the field of employment, including recruitment. The Act also places responsibility on the employer to make 'reasonable adjustment' in relation to the disabled person. Reasonable adjustments being steps that an employer can reasonably take to prevent arrangements made by him/her or physical features of premises occupied by him/her from putting a disabled person at a disadvantage in comparison with a non-disabled person.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against or harass an employee on the grounds of age.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

This makes it unlawful to discriminate against or harass an employee on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate or harass an employee on the grounds of religion and belief.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Gender Duty 2007

The Act and the Duty make it unlawful to discriminate or harass an employee on the grounds of transgender status

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Act provides that if a convicted person completes a specified period without being convicted of further offences, the conviction can be regarded as “spent”. These sentences then do not have to be revealed and may not be used as exclusion from employment and promotion.

The Human Rights Act 1998

This Act gives further effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms in the European Convention of Human Rights

Employee Protection (Part-Time Employees) Regulations 1995

This Act removed the provisions, which excluded part-time employees continuously employed for less than 16 hours a week from a number of statutory provisions enjoyed by full time employees. All employees, regardless of the hours per a week for which they are normally employed, are entitled to those rights upon completion of 12 months continuous employment with their employer (including employment within an associated company).

GWA will also adhere to the Commission for Racial Equality’s Code of Practice in Rented Housing.

5. GWA will take action (using the appropriate policy and procedure) against any member of staff, volunteer, Management Committee member, service user or visitor who commits any form of discrimination based on gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or cultural belief.

EMPLOYMENT

6. GWA’s approach to equality of opportunity with regard to employment is as follows:
 - As a women’s organisation, GWA will only employ women as per section 7(2)e of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
 - GWA will strive to achieve representation of all sections of the community at all levels within the organisation and within all types of work carried out.
 - Applicants for paid staff posts, women seeking to volunteer and persons seeking a place on The Management Committee will receive equal treatment regardless of their race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or cultural beliefs.

- Conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable will not disadvantage applicants.
- Selection criteria and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- All employees will receive equal treatment regardless of their race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or cultural beliefs. This applies to all other aspects of employment including, induction, probationary period, training and development, support and supervision, appraisal, remuneration, redundancy, re-deployment, disciplinary action and dismissal.

ACCESS TO AND RECEIPT OF SERVICES

7. GWA's approach to equality of opportunity with regard to access to and receipt of services is as follows:
- GWA will take practical steps to ensure that our services are diverse and accessible to all women and children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or cultural beliefs.
 - Women and children seeking to access GWA's services will be treated equally regardless of their race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or cultural beliefs.
 - Neither will women and children seeking to access GWA's services be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
 - There is a fair and transparent process for application and assessment for access to our services.
 - We recognise that our Women and children are from a diverse background. We will ensure that Women and children receiving GWA's services will be treated equally regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or cultural beliefs. This applies to all aspects of receiving services, including application, referral, acceptance into refuge or floating support, needs assessment, individual support planning, risk assessment, consultation, involvement, move-on and after-care.
 - GWA will accept lesbian couples, however they must **both** be fleeing violence.

Accessing interpretation & Translation Services

8. GWA's services are available to all women regardless of which language they may speak. For those women where English is not their first language, we will offer interpretation and translation services.
- Our first concern with any interpreting/translation services is that it is offered preferably by a woman and one who is familiar with domestic violence and its effect on women and children. The interpreter will also need to be empathic to the work we do, be non-judgmental and believe that a woman is in control of the process.
 - If a woman is referred through a statutory agency we will always try to arrange for that agency to provide some interpretation and translation services, e.g. Language Line (for very basic information), for the other agency to provide an interpreter, or to pay for an interpreter.

- Where this is not possible, or only partially possible we shall attempt to provide interpreting services through those people known to the organisation, through Women's Aid Groups and through other trusted partnership agencies.
- Where English is not the service users' first language, we will ensure (within our resources) that women have access to our Residents Handbook.

PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE

STAFFING

Recruitment and selection

The Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure sets out the process in detail. The main elements in terms of anti-discriminatory practice are set out below.

1. Advertisement of posts:

- All posts will be advertised both internally and externally in the local (and where appropriate national and/or specialist) press.
- Regular liaison will be undertaken with local race equality, disability and gay and lesbian organisations to ensure that people from ethnic minority group's disabled and gay and lesbian groups are encouraged to apply.

2. Wording of advertisements:

- Job descriptions and supporting information will not contain any unnecessary stereotypes or expectations about the future post holder.
- In line with our responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, GWA will make reasonable adjustment to overcome any factor which puts a disabled employee or job applicant at a disadvantage.

3. Monitoring of applicants and recruits

- Recruitment packs will include a monitoring form that asks for details of age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin and disability. This will be separated from the main application form for monitoring purposes before the form is sent to those responsible for short listing.
- The details on the monitoring sheet will be collected and analysed against the profile of people actually obtaining jobs. Where people from under represented groups do not appear to be applying for, or gaining particular posts, action to redress the imbalance will be taken by encouraging applications from those groups. This data will be regularly reported to and reviewed by the Management Committee.

4. Short listing:

- At least one member of staff and one member of the Management Committee will always carry out short listing.

5. Selection for interview:

- Selection will be on the basis of skills, knowledge, and relevant experience and any qualifications (if essential to the post) and supporting details provided by the applicant on her reasons for applying for the job.

6. Interviews:

- Interviews will always be conducted by at least two members of staff/Management Committee members who have been trained in interviewing techniques, and in the application of the equal opportunities policy.
- Where appropriate, interviews will be backed up by practical tests of ability - e.g. a typing test, appropriate test.
- The decision on whom to appoint must be agreed by a majority of the interviewers and be in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure.
- The only criteria for selection will be the applicant's ability to demonstrate the extent to which she fulfils the person specification. The applicant who best meets the person specification will be offered the vacancy, subject to references and CRB check.

Other aspects of employment

7. The following policies and procedures cover other aspects of employment and staff are expected to follow these conscientiously:
- Training and development
 - Support and supervision
 - Staff appraisal
 - Capability- Conditions of Employment and Job Role/Specification
 - Disciplinary and grievance

Anyone who feels they have been discriminated against in any of the above areas should discuss this, in line with the Grievance Policy and Procedure, initially with the Manager. If this does not resolve the concern, the staff member should raise a formal grievance, following the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

SERVICE USERS

The following policies and procedures cover all aspects of accessing and receiving services and staffs are expected to follow these conscientiously to ensure that women and children seeking and using GWA's services are not discriminated against:

- Initial assessment, referral and application policy and procedure
- Needs assessment, support planning and key working policy and procedure
- Risk assessment and management policy and procedure

Service users who feel that they have been discriminated against in any way by GWA in its service access or provision are encouraged to use GWA's complaints procedure

Monitoring

In order to monitor the effectiveness of GWA's Equality and Diversity Policy, we will use equality and diversity indicators for their own management purposes as a matter of good practice.

Quantitative data will include the following workforce and service user profiles: Age, disability, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. See Appendix 1

Qualitative evaluation tools such as service user exit questionnaires, complaints, comments will ask specific questions about equality and diversity.

Analysis of monitoring data will be reported to the Management Committee annually for information and service/organisational reviews.

010 / Equality & Diversity Pol / 12.12.08

APPENDIX 1 - 010 / Equality & Diversity Pol / Appendix 1 - Diversity Monitoring

Diversity Monitoring

Monitoring is an important way of building an accurate picture of our service users and how effective we are at delivering good quality services to them.

We want our services to reflect the diverse and cultural needs of our service users.

We use the monitoring information to promote diversity and helps us make sure that there is no discrimination in our service provision.

I do not wish to complete the Diversity Monitoring information

Greenwich Women's Aid

Equality & Diversity Monitoring Form

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Greenwich Women's Aid wishes to ensure that its services are available to the whole of Greenwich's diverse community. In order to monitor this we ask if you would complete this monitoring form.

EQUALITY MONITORING FORM

ETHNICITY

Ethnic group	
White	
White British	
White Irish	
Black	
Black-African	
Black-Caribbean	
Black any other background	
Black Somali	
Mixed	
White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Any other mixed background	
Asian or Asian British	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Any other Asian background	

Employment status

Employed	
Self employed	
Unemployed in receipt of benefits	
Retired/No income	
Student	

Age of clients

Age: 18 and under	
Age: 19-25	
Age: 26-50	
Age: 51-65	
Age: 66-80	
Age: 80+	

Sexuality

How would you describe your sexuality

Heterosexual	
Lesbian	
Bisexual	
I do not wish to answer	

Language needs

Language/communication needs none	
Language and communication-Requires interpreter/mediator with language (including BSL)	

