



Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Sun Network strives for high standards both as an employer and in our work. 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.

1.2 This Policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for the Sun Network to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation.

1.3 Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action.

1.4 The Sun Network's aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. The Sun Network is committed to reviewing this policy every three years, or as legislation changes. Through our training, publications, interaction with members and other activities, The Sun Network will ensure that those we work with know our statements of policy.

1.5 The Sun Network will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

2. Definitions

2.1 Equal Opportunities ensure that policies, procedures and practice within the Sun Network do not discriminate against the people within it. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of who they are, their background or their lifestyle.

2.2 Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to the Sun Network 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.

2.3 Direct Discrimination occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnership), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, maternity or pregnancy, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

2.4 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition, which although it applies equally to persons of all groups, is such that only a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it. Examples: a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group; requiring applicants to have British qualifications.

2.5 Victimation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted rights under the Equality Act 2010 or acted as a whistleblower. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

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2.6 Harassment means repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an employee or participant or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual. (See The Sun Network's Harassment & Bullying Policy for guidance where harassment or bullying has occurred).

2.7 Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that are comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures would normally take the form of additional training. 'Positive discrimination' at the point of selection for work is not permissible.

The Sun Network urges staff, volunteers, directors and service users 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.

3. Policy Statements

Diversity

3.1 The Sun Network will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and communities.

3.2 The Sun Network 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 respect and that their contribution will be valued.

3.3 The way we work, train and learn within the Sun Network reflects both our Mission and Objectives and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

3.4 The Sun Network will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to staff and service users to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in the Sun Network's work.

3.5 The Sun Network 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.

Equal Opportunities

3.6 The Sun Network is an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No job applicant, employee, volunteer, director, member or service user should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnership), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, maternity or pregnancy, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

Nor will such a person be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This principle applies to recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, benefits, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment.

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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 services we provide
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality (Equality Act 2010 which replaced the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006).
- 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 staff and service users
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the Sun Network's work.
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy as a necessary qualification for any position in the Sun Network.
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all The Sun Network's 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 The Sun Network recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and we 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 Directors. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to the Manager. However, the Sun Network 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. Therefore:

5.3 The Sun Network expects individuals:

- to co-operate with measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and non-discrimination
- not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other employee or participant on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnership), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, maternity or pregnancy HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

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- to feel sufficiently confident to inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

5.4 The Sun Network expects the Executive Director:-

- to ensure that proper 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 the 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.
- ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated documents are reviewed on an annual basis, or as legislation dictates.
- review and approve policies, procedures and practices that impact on equal opportunities and diversity practice.

6. Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion

6.1 The Sun Network strives to ensure that our staff 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 widest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external.

6.3 All recruitment material should not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a post to a particular group.

6.4 Applicants will be informed, through all recruitment material of the commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity and the existence of this policy.

6.5 Person specifications may include 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements that are necessary and justifiable. Care, and advice where necessary, is needed to ensure these are not discriminatory.

6.6 Staff, volunteers and directors should be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals.

6.7 Job titles that are discriminatory should be avoided.

7. Policy Implementation: Interviews and Selection

7.1 In line with the intentions of this policy, interviewing and selection policies and processes must take care to reflect the gender, disability and ethnic make-up of the Sun Network when selecting the panel.

7.2 The short-listing panel will not select candidates on the basis of the gender, name, possible disability or age of the candidate.

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7.3 The interview panel must take extreme care not to ask discriminatory questions unrelated to the requirements of the job, e.g. gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnership), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, maternity or pregnancy, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

8. Policy Implementation: Training

8.1 In line with the intentions of this policy, the Sun Network will not discriminate in the provision of training courses/ opportunities wherever possible unless we are forced to do so due to outside factors e.g. constraints of our building.

8.2 Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff 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 staff and new service users.

8.4 Staff will from time to time provide training sessions for volunteers, directors and service users on issues related to Equality and Diversity.

9. Enforcement

9.1 The Sun Network 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.

9.2 Any staff member who feels they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Grievance Procedure.

9.3 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 manager, who must report any such complaint to the Board of Directors. If the complaint is about the manager, this should be made through a Director.

9.4 Any director or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Grievance Procedure

9.5 Any director or volunteer applicant who believes that he/ she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the manager or the Board of Directors.

9.6 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 Project manager or the Board of Directors.

9.7 All incidents of direct discrimination are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure.

9.8 Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure.

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9.9 Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the Harassment & Bullying Procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

9.10 The Sun Network will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are oversensitive about discrimination.

9.11 Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment.

9.12 Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary be refused future services from the Sun Network.

9.13 Any director or volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with their agreement with the organisation.

10. Monitoring

10.1 The Sun Network views the collection/analysis of data as vital in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on The Sun Network's services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters. We will review employee turnover and seek information on reasons for leaving. Local and national data or statistics will be used to benchmark our performance.

10.2 The Directors will review annually equality of opportunity relating to The Sun Network services. Recruitment and selection procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the manager who will report to the Board of Directors.

10.3 In order to determine the impact of this policy it is important that a monitoring system be developed which will measure commitment, progress and effectiveness. The Diversity and Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed as follows:

- The manager will undertake a policy review every three years, or earlier if a change in legislation requires. All relevant parties will be encouraged to submit comments for consideration.
- The review recommendations will be presented to the next Director meeting for their comments and ratification.

10.4 Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the manager will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach.

10.5 If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of staff, volunteers, directors or restricting service users, the manager should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.

Approved by The SUN Network Board of Directors Date: 23 April 2018

Next Review Date: April 2021

Responsible Officer Executive Director of The SUN Network.

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Signed..... Date.....

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