

Realise Futures CIC

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Realise Futures CIC

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Assurance Statement

This policy aims to ensure that Realise Futures CIC accepts and embraces peoples' differences, recognising individuals' ability and that it creates an environment that underpins the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998 – fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy for ALL.

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the ways in which Realise Futures will promote equality and diversity in all its work.

We value the diversity of people and aim to embed the five principles of the Human Rights Act across all of our services and in all of our work:

- Fairness
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity
- Autonomy

It is an important policy for everyone who works for Realise Futures, for all service users and family carers and for all the organisations who we work in partnership with.

2. Principles

We value and celebrate the contribution which diversity brings to the organisation.

We acknowledge the significant impact of discrimination and oppression on people's lives and are committed to ensuring that we support them in "making the most of their lives".

We will not tolerate unfair discriminatory behaviour or any bullying or harassment.

We will challenge discriminatory attitudes.

Staff, service users, family carers and members of Realise Futures will not receive less favourable treatment based on their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibility or flexible working in employment, recruitment, training and development or access to services.

Appendix 1 lists the definitions of Equal Opportunities, Diversity, Direct/Indirect discrimination, Victimisation, Harassment and Positive Action and the Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010).

3. Scope

This policy covers all divisions within Realise Futures; Learning & Development, Employment, RF Works including all service delivery. It extends to all protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity).

This policy supersedes any documents or guidance that has either not been reviewed or had an equality impact assessment on equality, diversity and human rights and should be used to inform future decision making.

This policy applies to;

- All employees of Realise Futures, including those seconded to Realise Futures
- Volunteers in the organisation
- Service users, family carers
- Contractors and sub-contractors
- Visitors to the organisation

4. Responsibilities: Board of Directors

Overall responsibility for overseeing this policy rests with the Realise Futures Board.

The lead Director for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is the Managing Director.

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that Realise Futures complies with equalities legislation and promotes equality of opportunity across the organisation.

The Board of Directors will ensure that allegations of discrimination (direct or indirect), bullying, harassment or grievances are investigated and dealt with appropriately following Realise Futures' relevant policy guidance:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Grievance Procedure (identified in the Employee Handbook)
- Disciplinary, Hearings and Appeals Policy
- Complaints Process
- Health and Safety Policy and Guidance

5. Responsibilities: Staff

The co-ordinating responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is delegated to the Operations Managers of each division.

All employees have an individual responsibility to promote the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application.

Staff must report to the appropriate manager, HR or trade union representative (where applicable) any incidents of discrimination, bullying or harassment at work, which come to their attention.

Allegations that are raised regarding discrimination, bullying or harassment will be investigated. Realise Futures gives an assurance that there will be no victimisation against an employee making a complaint or against employees who assist or support a colleague in making the complaint.

Discrimination, bullying and harassment may be treated as a disciplinary offence and where allegations are founded, may lead to dismissal.

Disciplinary action may also be taken if a complaint is found to have been submitted maliciously or in bad faith.

Please see:

Disciplinary, Hearings and Appeals Policy
Grievance Process (Employee Handbook)
Harassment and Bullying Policy

We aim to ensure that all staff, board members and volunteers are aware of and feel able to challenge the less obvious types of discrimination, which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals.

6. Expectations of service users, family carers, members or visitors of Realise Futures

All service users, family carers or any other person accessing Realise Futures services must behave in a way which is consistent with this policy.

Employees, volunteers and other people associated with Realise Futures, including other service users and family carers, are also entitled to fair treatment, respect and dignity.

Realise Futures will not tolerate any forms of discrimination, bullying or harassment towards our staff or any other person accessing our services.

Allegations regarding discrimination, bullying or harassment will be investigated.

There will be no victimisation against an individual making a complaint or against anyone who assists or support the individual in making the complaint.

Please see the RF Complaints Process

Steps may be taken to withdraw services from service users who behave in a discriminatory way towards other service users or staff.

Please see the RF Bullying and harassment policy.

7. Training in and awareness of the policy – staff

Managers must ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy either as current members of staff or new employees.

Equality and diversity issues are covered in Realise Futures induction process for staff and volunteers.

Employees and volunteers must have a level of knowledge and skill in this area consistent with their duties. Equality and diversity is covered as a core competency and is required as mandatory staff training. Managers must discuss equality and diversity issues as part of supervision and with performance appraisal meetings.

8. Awareness and competence of the policy – service users, learners, family carers, partners and others

All service users and carers should be given information about services on their first contact with Realise Futures or as soon as possible thereafter. This information should include an equal opportunities statement referring to this policy.

9. Recruitment

Realise Futures will aim to ensure that its workforce reflects the diversity of Suffolk's communities.

Realise Futures will ensure that job descriptions and person specifications will only require criteria that are necessary for jobs.

The Vacancy Authorisation and Recruitment Guidance sets out the ways in which Realise Futures will ensure fairness in the selection and appointment process.

Please see:

Vacancy Authorisation and Recruitment Guidance
Flexible Working Policy

10. Communication

Care must be taken in the choice of words and the selection of images to ensure that information is inclusive and promotes equality and diversity.

All information leaflets and posters for the public or service users must be approved by the Business Systems & Compliance Manager.

Realise Futures will make information available in different formats and languages, where practicable and on request.

Please see:

Communication Strategy

11. Complaints and Compliments

Realise Futures welcomes any compliments, comments or feedback on equality and diversity issues.

Any issues or themes in relation to equality and human rights will be brought to the attention of the appropriate Operations Manager and where necessary to the Realise Futures Board.

Please refer to:

Complaints Process
Whistle Blowing Policy
Bullying and Harassment Policy

12. Monitoring

To ensure that this policy is being achieved, Realise Futures will continue to monitor data about employees, job applicants, training and service users in respect of their race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

The data will be used to inform Realise Futures in planning and delivering a culturally competent service. It will ensure staff, service users and family carers feel supported and empowered to access opportunities and services equally.

The table in Appendix 2 provides details of the types of data Realise Futures will monitor and gives examples of what the information can provide for the organisation.

Responsibility for data collection:

- Service delivery – Operations Manager

- Recruitment and selection – HR
- Disciplinary and grievance – HR
- Complaints – Business Systems and Compliance
- Training and development – HR

Realise Futures will carry out compliance audits at regular (usually annual) intervals. All staff have a responsibility to assist with these compliance audits.

Appendix 3 lists useful resources for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS

Equal opportunities ensure that policies, procedures and practice within Realise Futures do not discriminate against their staff, service users, family carers and the wider community (*please note these group of individuals will be referred to as 'people' throughout the policy*) it represents. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of who they are, their background, their religion or belief or their lifestyle.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to Realise Futures and to the community. It recognises, appreciates, respects and values the differences people from different backgrounds and denominations bring and create an innovative organisation.

Direct discrimination:

Unlawful: occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Unfair: some kind of definition may not be prohibited by law but nonetheless unfair and cannot be justified and are covered by this policy for example: class, political beliefs or employment status.

Some forms of discrimination may be unlawful or unfair depending on the circumstances this can include for example discrimination towards someone with caring responsibilities or criminal convictions.

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 or are affected by it. Examples: a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group or requiring applicants to have only British qualifications may not be justified.

Discrimination by association: Associative discrimination now applies for all practical purposes to all the discrimination strands. It did apply already to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation and has been extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

An example of associative discrimination might be a non-disabled employee who is discriminated against because of action she needs to take to care for a disabled dependant. This incorporates the European Court of Justice's July 2008 ruling in the Coleman v Attridge Law case, where Sharon Coleman, a

legal secretary, lodged a claim after alleging she was subject to harassment and discrimination after asking for time off to care for her disabled son.

The Act extends disability discrimination to '**Discrimination ARISING from disability**'. This is a new provision. The clause provides that it is discrimination to treat a disabled person in a particular way which, because of his or her disability, amounts to treating him or her badly and the treatment cannot be shown to be justified. For this type of discrimination to occur, the employer or other person must know, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the disabled person has a disability. Also the person who treats the disabled person in that way may still be liable for discrimination under this provision, whether or not the duty to make reasonable adjustments has been complied with.

The protection by association could have implications in relation to requests for time off or flexible working, parking permits for student parents with disabled children, etc.

Perception discrimination applies for all practical purposes to all the discrimination strands. This already applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation and has been extended to cover disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted rights under the various equality legislations or acted as a whistleblower on such activity. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

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 participants 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 Realise Future's Harassment and Bullying Policy and Guidance).

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

Protected Characteristics:

Age: refers to a person belonging to a particular age or range of ages e.g., 32 or 18-10 year olds.

Disability: A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender Reassignment: The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period before the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth and this includes a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race: Refers to the protected characteristics of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion and Belief: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (such as Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: A man or a woman.

Sexual Orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

APPENDIX 2

TYPES OF DATA REALISE FUTURES WILL MONITOR

Area Monitored	Staff	Service User/Family Carer/ Member
Ethnicity	<p>Does Realise Futures (RF) ensure and promote equality of opportunity? How does the % of RF black and minority ethnic (BME) staff balance with Suffolk's overall population? What % of applicants is from BME communities? What % of BME staff are accessing training? How and if BME staff progress in their career development? What % of our disciplinary and complaints are in relation to BME staff? What % of our disciplinary and complaints are from BME staff? Does the BME staff support group feel empowered to voice their needs?</p>	<p>What % of BME service user/family carer/ community are accessing RF services? Are their communication and cultural needs being met? How do people rate our services in respect of being culturally competent and meeting our duty? What % of complaints/ compliments are from BME service users and family carers? Cultural and/or religious needs may be identified by knowing the individual's ethnicity, which can support their recovery and mental wellbeing.</p>
Disability	<p>Does RF ensure and promote equality of opportunity? What % of applicants and staff has a disability? How do applicants and staff rate RF in respect of 'reasonable adjustments' e.g. hearing loop; wheel chair access; mental ill health? Do staff feel supported in accessing training and having their needs met? How does RF promote equality of opportunity and meeting the legal duty?</p>	<p>Are reasonable adjustments being made to meet individual's needs, e.g. hearing loop. Is RF inclusive of people with a disability and does it ensure their participation and involvement?</p>

<p>Gender/ Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Does RF ensure and promote equality of opportunity for men, women and trans gender/sexual people in employment, training and development, access to promotion etc.?</p>	<p>Do services respect gender specification needs? How do people using our services rate our provisions?</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Does RF ensure and promote equality of opportunity for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual (LGB) staff?</p>	<p>Do people using RF services feel respected and empowered? Is RF inclusive of LGB service users and family carers? How is RF raising awareness?</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Does RF ensure and promote equality of opportunity? Do staff at the top and bottom spectrum of employment age feel respected and treated with dignity? Ensuring that all RF staff are not discriminated with regards to their age Monitoring Recruitment and Retirement policy</p>	<p>RF is developing an 'age inclusive' service, hence the importance of monitoring the age range accessing services Do people of ALL ages feel their dignity is respected and treated fairly? Does RF ensure and promote equality of opportunity in accessing services?</p>
<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>What provisions are available for staff of different faiths? With the diversity of staff, do they feel respected and empowered in raising cultural awareness?</p>	<p>Do service users feel that their faith/spiritual needs are being met? Are there dates/times that would not be appropriate to meet, e.g. prayer or festivals? Do service users feel that RF staff have an understanding and respect their needs in relation to their mental wellbeing?</p>

Appendix 3

Useful Resources

- 'Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care Action Plan' – http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4100773
- Department of Health – www.doh.gov.uk
- Equality and Human Rights Commission – www.equalityhumanrights.com
- Age Positive – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/age-positive>
- NHS Employers – www.nhsemployers.org
- Disability Rights Commission – www.drc.org.uk 'Doing the Duty'
- Equality Act 2010 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>
- British Society for Mental Health & Deafness - <http://www.bsmhd.org.uk/>
- Ministry of Justice – www.dca.gov.uk
- Ipswich and Suffolk Commission for Racial Equality – ISCRE – www.iscre.org.uk/
- Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource – www.sifre.org.uk
- Suffolk LGBT - <http://www.suffolklgbtnetwork.org.uk/index.php>
- Suffolk County Council – www.suffolk.gov.uk
- Protected Characteristics - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>