

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Signed:	Date:
XXXX, Chair of Board of Trustees	Review Date: October 2026

1. Definitions

Equal Opportunities

Tyneside Women's Health is committed to promoting equal opportunity in employment. We aim that all employees and service users will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, mental or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**). We are also committed to providing equitable treatment to all those we deal with as an organisation, including customers and suppliers.

Diversity

Diversity is a broader concept that builds upon the progress made through equal opportunities. Everyone is different and diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing the differences we each bring to society.

Equal opportunities and diversity work together by addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by people in under-represented groups and by valuing, learning and benefiting from the diverse cultures in society, our staff, volunteers, trustees and service users.

Inclusive Workplace

Tyneside Women's Health strives for a workplace where everyone feels valued, involved and respected for their ideas, perspectives, skills and experiences. Tyneside Women's Health promotes a culture of openness where everyone can feel comfortable to ask questions, respectfully challenge and feel confident that our spaces are safe and inclusive.

2 Aims of the Policy

Tyneside Women's Health aims to ensure that the rights of every woman are protected so that they enjoy equality of opportunity to participate in society. Tyneside Women's Health recognises that equal treatment does not require treating women as if they are all the same. Tyneside Women's Health values the differences and diversity of its staff, volunteers, trustees and service users.

The Equality and Diversity Policy has been drawn up to enable Tyneside Women's Health to:

- Ensure equality of opportunity for all staff, volunteers, trustees and service users of Tyneside Women's Health
- Promote good practice with regard to celebrating the diversity of all women that encounter Tyneside Women's Health in order to contribute to a more inclusive society.

3. Policy Statement

Tyneside Women's Health is exempt under the Sex Discrimination Act section 7(2) (e) of the Sex Discrimination Act as incorporated into the Equality Act 2010. All our services are provided by women, for women including transgender women, defined, for the purposes of this policy, as individuals identifying as and living as women full-time in all spheres of life.

Tyneside Women's Health is run by women, for women and provides a range of interventions for women with mental health issues and women whose wellbeing has been affected. Our services are open for all women and our primary aim is to ensure that every woman is treated with dignity and respect and is provided with tailored services which will give them equal chances to succeed.

Tyneside Women's Health's dedication to equality and diversity is more than promoting equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination. We strongly believe in encouraging and promoting the positive contribution of our diverse workforce and users of our service. It is our priority to ensure that this commitment to equality and diversity is reflected in our practices, policies and services provided.

Tyneside Women's Health's service delivery emphasises creativity, effective problem solving and innovative approaches therefore, we value a productive environment representative of and responsive to women of different cultures and groups, with different experiences and perspectives.

Tyneside Women's Health does however recognise that certain groups and individuals are discriminated against in society. We know that discrimination and oppression takes many forms and that regular experience of micro aggressions can be as harmful as overt discrimination. Tyneside Women's Health is opposed to all discrimination and is committed to equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity in the recruitment of its staff, volunteers, the services it provides to women, and the composition of its trustees.

Tyneside Women's Health is committed to achieving equality of opportunity by removing all direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also seek to remove barriers imposed by a woman's purported class and family circumstances/ caring responsibilities.

4. Scope of the Policy

Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination in our workplace. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay, benefits and conditions, flexible working and leave, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. We aim to ensure that all existing and potential staff, volunteers, trustees and service users are treated in an equal manner that celebrates their diversity is the responsibility of everyone who represents the name of Tyneside Women's Health. As such, this policy applies to all paid staff, the board of trustees, volunteers, students and anyone else that officially represents Tyneside Women's Health, including service users representing the organisation in an official role.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide service, and we may amend it at any time.

5. Responsibilities

Managers, staff, volunteers and trustees are responsible for:

- fostering a culture in which compliance with this policy is regarded as integral to the work of the area and in which equality and diversity issues are actively promoted;
- identifying appropriate staff development to meet the needs of their respective roles
- ensuring service users are encouraged and supported to
 - (i) reach their personal potential
 - (ii) support and implement the aims of this policy;
 - (iii) contribute to an environment free of fear or intimidation and which celebrates diversity;
 - (iv) ensure that their behaviour and actions do not amount to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation in any way.

All staff have a responsibility to access, attend and improve their knowledge around diversity and inclusion appropriate to their role.

- 1.1 Managers will be given appropriate training on recognising and avoiding discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in the areas of recruitment, development and promotion.
- 1.2 All staff will be provided with regular training to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands the contents of this policy and the Anti-harassment and Bullying statement and procedures. Following the training, you will be required

to confirm that you have read, understand and will comply with this policy and the Anti-harassment and Bullying Procedure.

- 1.3 We will provide equality and diversity training regularly as well as opportunities to discuss issues as they arise within team meetings and / or reflective practice

6. Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, service users, suppliers, volunteers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts [or when wearing a work uniform]), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay. Direct discrimination can include associative discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of their association with an individual with a Protected Characteristic, and perception discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of the mistaken belief that they possess a Protected Characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

7. Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Department or UK Visas and Immigration.

8. Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

9. Part-time and Fixed-term Work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

10. Breaches of the Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination and victimisation may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe you have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination, or witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you can raise the matter through our grievance procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about or report discrimination. If you believe you have been victimised for making a complaint or report of discrimination, or have witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you should raise this through our grievance procedure.

Any service user who feels she has been discriminated against by a representative of Tyneside Women's Health should be supported by relevant staff & volunteers to report the matter to a member of the Management Team, as soon as possible. If a member of the Management Team is the source of the perceived unfair treatment then another member of the Management Team should be approached, or, if it is the CEO, the Chair of the Board of Trustees should be notified.

Any member of staff or volunteer who feels she has been discriminated against by a representative of Tyneside Women's Health should discuss this immediately with her Line Manager. If the Line Manager is the source of the perceived unfair treatment then another member of the Management Team should be approached, or, if it is the CEO, the Chair of the Board of Trustees should be notified.

Any Trustee who feels she has been discriminated against by a representative of Tyneside Women's Health, should discuss the matter with the Chair of the Board of Trustees unless the Chair is the source of the perceived unfair treatment, at which point the matter should be reported to another Trustee.

With regard to any breach of the policy by service users, Tyneside Women's Health will take appropriate action in relation to the nature of the incident, in ways that pay due regard to the dignity of service user/s involved.

We encourage the reporting of all types of potential discrimination, as this assists us in ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion principles are adhered to in the workplace. However, making a false allegation in bad faith, or that you know to be untrue, will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years from the initial review by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving this policy, whilst, the Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the policy and associated procedures are implemented. The procedures will be updated as a matter of course to ensure compliance with national legislation or best practice recommendations. The procedures may be updated with CEO approval. The Management Team will ensure that this policy is read and signed by all to whom it applies and will co-ordinate the schedule for Trustee Review.

Tyneside Women's Health's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Procedures

1. Services Which Support the Equality and Diversity Agenda

Tyneside Women's Health has a long history and track record of providing services and interventions that promote equality and embrace diversity. These include but are not limited to:

- Interventions that are targeted to women with specific needs e.g. older women, women from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.
- Working with service users and the wider community to challenge stigma and discrimination, including but not limited to: mental health, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and cultural identity

- Working at policy level, for example helping to develop needs assessments with public sector partners which informing wider strategic responses.
- Actively working to ensure that Tyneside Women's Health and other organisations provide services that are responsive to the diverse needs of women.
- Supporting service users who have experienced harassment and unfair treatment, for example supporting individuals to report hate crime.

2. Recruitment practice that promotes equality and diversity / discourages discrimination

Tyneside Women's Health is committed to robust recruitment practices for paid staff, trustees and volunteers. This involves

- including a commitment to equality and diversity in person specifications
- including equality and diversity as a question in all interviews
- providing information on the organisation's values as part of the recruitment process, which includes equality and diversity
- monitoring the diversity of applicants
- ensuring references are taken up and
- ensuring effective induction is provided.

Further details on recruitment practices are available in Tyneside Women's Health's Recruitment, Selection, Induction and Retention Policy and associated procedures. In order to ensure the information collected on the diversity of applicants is put to good use, the Business Administrator will ensure that the anonymised information is collated shared with the interview panel immediately following the closing date.

This information on the diversity of the applicants will enable the panel to consider whether the post was advertised broadly enough (in line with the timescale for recruitment and the resources available). The panel will consider this separately from the actual shortlisting of candidates.

Before a new recruitment takes place, previous recommendations from past panels will be considered with regard to where the post is advertised and ensuring it is advertised as widely as resources will allow.

3. Ongoing Support for Staff and Volunteers

Tyneside Women's Health will regularly ask staff for feedback in the form of staff surveys to understand how improvements can be made to our culture and working practices.

Annually, staff will be asked to verify and update the information that Tyneside Women's Health holds about them ensuring the diversity of the team is understood

and that individual staff have the opportunity to highlight any new or updated support needs that may have not previously been known or addressed.

Staff are encouraged to communicate changes in their support needs to their Line Manager so that Tyneside Women's Health can consider any required adjustments.

4. Training and Development of Staff with Regard to Equality and Diversity

Tyneside Women's Health training provision will ensure that induction training for all staff includes awareness of equality and diversity issues, as well as a full overview of the organisation's policies and procedures that address equality and diversity themes, including but not limited to

Staff

- Recruitment, Selection, Induction and Retention Policy and Procedures
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Grievance Procedures
- Capability Policy Procedures
- Anti-harassment and Bullying Procedures
- Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures
- Social Media, Branding & External Communications Policy & Procedures
- Learning and Development Policy and Procedures and associated Core Training Plan
- Code of Conduct
- Strategic Plan
- Operational Plans

Service Users

- Working with Service Users Policy and Procedures
- Compliments & Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Service User Handbook, including Ground Rules

Tyneside Women's Health has challenging unacceptable / discriminatory behaviour as a standing item at all team meetings to support staff to deal with any incidences. In addition, all Tyneside Women's Health job descriptions explicitly state that the individual post holder is required to work positively to identify her own learning needs within supervision, annual appraisal, team meetings etc. and contribute to their own professional development. Therefore, honestly identifying learning and development

needs in relation to equality and diversity issues in the team and addressing them in a culture of openness and positively are both encouraged and expected.