

## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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### **Statement of Intent**

E.A.S.E. (Empowering Action and Social Esteem) Ltd is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Trustees, service users and the public.

We respect and celebrate difference and will promote principles of understanding and respect for others, and that everyone who delivers, uses, or comes into contact with E.A.S.E feels respected and able to give their best.

To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness and that no one will be discriminated against, including children, young people, clients, staff members or visitors to EASE premises on the grounds of social circumstances or background (class), age, gender or marital status, race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religious beliefs, pregnancy or maternity, disability, sexual orientation, physical disability, learning disability or mental health need and unrelated criminal record.

As indicated in E.A.S.E.'s 2022-2025 strategy, E.A.S.E will continuously review and adapt its working practices and service delivery, challenge unconscious bias, and review and adapt its policies and consult the community to further this aim.

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination
- To advance equality of opportunity
- To foster good relations and understanding

### **Legislation and Law**

This policy has been developed using existing legislations, including:

- Equalities Act (2010)
- Sex Discrimination Act (1975 and amendment 1986)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- Human Rights Act (1988)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Employment Relations Act (1999)
- Equal Pay Act (1970) and National Minimum Wage Act (1998)
- Employment Rights Act (1996)
- Maternity & Parental Leave Regulations (1998 and 2002)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a 'protected characteristic'. The Equality Act defines the protected characteristics as being age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user in the provision of services or goods or to fail to make reasonable adjustments.

#### Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However, discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a job role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Associative discrimination** is where the individual treated less favourably does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does e.g. the parent of a disabled child.
- **Perceptive discrimination** is where the individual discriminated against or harassed does not have a protected characteristic, but they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Third-party harassment** occurs where an employee is harassed by third parties such as service users, due to a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act i.e. because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make a reasonable adjustment. Whilst the Equality Act refers to reasonable adjustments with regards to disability, it may also be discriminatory to

ignore making reasonable adjustments for people with other protected characteristics (for example to enable someone to respect a religious belief, providing gender neutral toilets, making adjustments for a woman experiencing severe menopausal symptoms etc).

- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

#### **Types of Harassment:**

- **Psychological harassment**  
This is humiliating or abusing a person that can lower their self-esteem and caused them torment. This can be in the form of verbal comments, actions or gestures
- **Racial harassment**  
This is harassment suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins. The harassment may be verbal or physical and can also include attacks on property.
- **Sexual harassment**  
Sexual harassment is one of the more commonly recognised forms of harassing behaviour. This kind of harassing behaviour may consist of sexual language, threats, or gestures, although when touching is involved, this is sexual assault.

This policy is mandatory on all people employed by or volunteering for E.A.S.E or using the services. The responsibility for implementing this policy is all members of E.A.S.E. Michelle Bailey, Managing Director and the Trustees will review the policy each year.

#### **Policy Implementation:**

- The Managing Director is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews.
- All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and training.
- All clients are made aware of this policy and are encouraged to follow the guidelines.
- Partner agencies are made aware of this policy and support its implementation where appropriate
- Formal training is provided (every 3 years) to the Managing Director, Family Support and Services Worker and Youth Manager and all staff, Trustees and volunteers are provided with opportunity to participate in anti-discriminatory training ensuring time and resources are available for this
- Ensuring staff, volunteers and Trustees do not discriminate themselves.
- Ensuring EDI is part of each supervision and team meeting, including embedding values (Strategy 2022-2025).

- Consulting the community on whether E.A.S.E.'s advertising and services made them feel welcome and included, accessible and are culturally appropriate.
- Regularly review data of service users to ensure we do not fall below 50% for IMD or 65% for BAME which is in line with our community data/make up. If data goes below this measure further investigation will take place and an action plan devised to mitigate any further reduction and increase baseline data.
- Ensuring that all clients, staff, volunteers and Trustees are free and comfortable to make complaints and are supported in doing so by relevant procedures and processes.
- Provide a fair working environment for all staff, volunteers and Trustees and ensuring equality of opportunity is promoted at every stage of recruitment and employment including:
  - Advertising
  - Training and development
  - To seek to remove any discriminatory practice and ill-treatment
  - Discipline
  - Terms and conditions of employment

#### **Arrangements for complaint:**

These are defined in the E.A.S.E.'s Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy and Disciplinary and Grievance at Work Policy (Staff and HR policies). All complaints and grievances will be investigated by Michelle Bailey, Managing Director. There will be appropriate action taken where necessary of which Michelle Bailey will be first point of call. If the grievance is against Michelle Bailey, the Trustees (Chair Sharon Ali and a minimum of one other Trustee) will oversee the complaint.

#### **Policy Review**

This Policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if an update is deemed necessary due to legislation or best practice. E.A.S.E. will ensure effective record keeping and monitoring, and acting on information gathered from staff, volunteers, Trustees and service users are essential in order to measure effectiveness and plan progress alongside E.A.S.E.'s strategy 2022-2025.

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Trustees on 6.7.22

Next policy review date 6.7.24