

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1.0 Purpose and Introduction

- 1.01 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the National Osteoporosis Society acts in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, and, more broadly, offers equality of opportunity for all who come into contact with us regardless of their diverse personal characteristics.
- 1.02 This policy focuses on five main areas:
- The recruitment, development and management of employees
 - The recruitment, development and management of volunteers
 - The delivery of services
 - The development of public and patient involvement and stakeholder engagement in both our own ongoing development, and in the development of healthcare delivery and research programmes which we support
 - Campaigning to ensure that people with osteoporosis have their needs recognised and met, such that they do not face exclusion or barriers when accessing public services

2.00 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Principles

- 2.01 For us, valuing diversity means recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about ensuring that our practices recognise, respect and value difference, so that we can all learn from each other.
- 2.02 For us, a commitment to inclusion means ensuring that people do not face barriers in their engagement with us because of their personal characteristics.
- 2.03 For us, equality does not mean treating everybody the same. Rather, it means understanding each individual's needs, such that people engaging with us experience equality of access, equality of treatment and equality of outcomes, regardless of their individual needs.
- 2.04 This policy is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010, ensuring that no person will be discriminated against on the basis of any of the nine characteristics protected by the Act:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Sex
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation

- 2.05 We recognise that disability may take many forms and be invisible, for example, mental health conditions, cognitive impairments and sensory impairments.
- 2.06 We recognise that discrimination can be both **direct**, where a particular individual is subjected to worse treatment because of a characteristic, and **indirect**, where a policy or work practice systematically affects particular groups of people. Through this policy we aim to ensure that nobody experiences discrimination in their engagement with us, whether direct or indirect.
- 2.07 We understand that sometimes people can face discrimination on the appearance of a characteristic, or because of an association with someone with a particular characteristic, such as a carer. This policy treats all such cases as discrimination.
- 2.08 We will treat all people coming into contact with the National Osteoporosis Society with dignity and respect.
- 2.09 We will not victimise anybody who raises a complaint or acts as a whistle blower to call out any poor practice that they report.

3.00 The recruitment, development and management of employees

- 3.01 The National Osteoporosis Society is committed to building a workforce whose diversity reflects the communities it serves.
- 3.02 We have a **Recruitment and Screening Policy** which ensures that throughout the recruitment process, job applicants are treated fairly and have equality of opportunity regardless of their personal characteristics.
- 3.03 With regard to additional characteristics that can cause barriers in employment, we will not discriminate on the basis of membership or non-membership of a Trade Union.
- 3.04 In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, we will not discriminate on the basis of spent criminal convictions, unless the role being recruited to requires a Disclosure and Barring Service check to be completed. Where there is such a requirement, this will be clearly stated in the advertisement and job description.
- 3.05 We have a range of policies covering our human resources practices, all of which are based on our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. This include: **Dignity at Work Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Special Leave Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Capability Policy and Management of Attendance Policy.**
- 3.06 We will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and working environments to meet the needs of individual employees wherever possible, when requests are raised to Human Resources.
- 3.07 We will ensure that the charity's policies covering pay, benefits, grading and other terms and conditions do not cause indirect discrimination.
- 3.08 Whilst the charity may be liable for any unlawful discrimination committed by its employees and volunteers, if the charity has taken all reasonable steps to prevent such discrimination from occurring, individual employees may be held personally liable for acts of unlawful

discrimination. All employees and volunteers must therefore understand the scope of the Equality Act 2010.

3.09 All employees will undertake mandatory equality and diversity training.

3.10 All employees and managers have duties and responsibilities through this policy which are outlined below. Where behaviour contravenes these duties and responsibilities, the matter may be dealt with through the **Disciplinary Policy**.

3.11 **All employees have a personal responsibility** to:

- Treat everybody they come into contact with through their work with respect and dignity
- Adjust their practice to ensure that everybody with whom they engage with through their work has equality of access, equality of treatment and equality of outcomes
- Intervene to prevent or halt situations involving harassment or discrimination
- Report to their line manager any behaviours or procedures which threaten to undermine this policy
- Respond promptly to any complaints about unfair treatment, ensuring that these are reported and escalated within the charity as appropriate

3.12 **All managers have additional responsibilities** to:

- Act in accordance with the **Recruitment and Screening Policy** when recruiting to vacant roles
- Act in accordance with the wider human resource policy framework when managing performance, ensuring that no employee faces unfair treatment
- Ensure that opportunities for training and career development are available to all employees on the basis of individual and organisational needs
- Ensure that the employee reporting to them are fully aware of this policy and receive appropriate training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Address any instances of discrimination or failure to comply with this policy in any employee reporting to them, through the **Disciplinary Policy**.

4.00 The recruitment, development and management of volunteers

4.01 The National Osteoporosis Society is committed to building a team of volunteers whose diversity reflects the communities it serves. We recognise that the community of people affected by osteoporosis does not reflect the same demographic profiles as the wider population.

4.02 We have a process for recruiting volunteers to ensure fairness and respect for individuals' needs.

- 4.03 We rely on volunteers to engage with local communities on our behalf. As such, volunteers become the gate-keepers for many people seeking to engage with the charity, and have an important role in delivering this policy.
- 4.04 We acknowledge that many volunteers may not have had the opportunity to develop their understanding of the issues surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion, and may have little knowledge of the Equality Act 2010. We will therefore ensure that all volunteers receive appropriate training and guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and this policy.
- 4.05 All volunteers have a named Development Manager, who will provide any necessary support to individual volunteers requesting additional support or guidance in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.06 **All volunteers are requested** to:
- Treat everybody they come into contact with through their volunteering role with respect and dignity
 - Adjust their practice to ensure that everybody with whom they engage with through their volunteering role has equality of access, equality of treatment and equality of outcomes
 - Intervene to prevent or halt situations involving harassment or discrimination
 - Report any behaviours or procedures which threaten to undermine this policy to their named Development Manager
 - Respond promptly to any complaints about unfair treatment, ensuring that these are reported and escalated to the Development Manager as appropriate
- 4.07 Where behaviour contravenes this policy, the Development Manager will discuss the matter with the relevant volunteer(s). In extreme cases, it may be necessary to end the volunteering agreement with the individual volunteer.

5.00 The delivery of services

- 5.01 We are committed to ensuring that all people seeking a service from us are treated fairly and with respect.
- 5.02 We will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to meet individual needs to ensure that people engaging with us receive equality of access, equality of treatment and equality of outcomes. For example:
- On request, we will provide translation or interpreting services
 - We will only use venues for public meetings which are accessible to people with mobility issues
 - We will use induction loops in public meetings wherever possible
 - We will provide information in large print if requested
 - We offer type and talk on the helpline

- 5.03 Our own support services are delivered through our employees and volunteers. As such, the main way in which we ensure adherence with this policy is through sections 3 and 4 of this policy.
- 5.04 In addition, we are committed to developing the use of technology to overcome barriers to access our central support services.
- 5.05 We are committed to working with a wide range of employees employed in health and social care through our service development and professional development work. We are committed to ensuring equality of access to all our training and professional development services.
- 5.06 We recognise that many instances of osteoporosis may be invisible, and that even where there are visible symptoms such as spine curvature, the complexity of symptoms (including pain, shortness of breath and digestive complaints) may be overlooked by those who do not have a good understanding of the condition. We are therefore committed to raising awareness of osteoporosis across the broader health and social care workforce.
- 5.07 Through our work with health and social care professionals and institutions, we can have an impact on the services experienced by a wide range of individuals. We will therefore embed good practice in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion in any guidance, training or standards that we produce.

6.00 Public and patient involvement and engagement

- 6.01 One of the National Osteoporosis Society's main roles is to understand, respond to, and where possible, project the voice, views and needs of people with osteoporosis.
- 6.02 Given that there is significant diversity within the population of people with osteoporosis, for our services to truly reflect the needs and concerns of people with osteoporosis, we need to ensure that we listen to the views of a wide variety of people with osteoporosis.
- 6.03 Through our Support Groups, Members and Volunteers Committee as well as through a range of less formal engagement opportunities, we seek feedback and ideas from people with osteoporosis.
- 6.04 We undertake regular research to understand the needs of people with osteoporosis. In this research, we request information about various personal characteristics, such as age, gender and home ownership, so that we can see whether we are reaching all parts of the community. We are committed to continuing and expanding our monitoring of diversity to improve future research.
- 6.05 Through our Research work, we regularly support researchers with their own PPIE on projects. We are committed to developing and expanding this work, as we recognise that only by involving patients from the design phase on can we have studies which are successful in recruiting participants, and which provide answers to questions that will improve patient outcomes in the future.

7.00 Influencing policy on behalf of people with osteoporosis

- 7.01 Many people with osteoporosis face barriers to participating in a wide variety of activities and receiving various services because of the condition.
- 7.02 In research we commissioned in 2013, we found that only 11% of the general public had any meaningful understanding of osteoporosis. Additionally, as osteoporosis is frequently invisible, even where it is understood, it may be overlooked.
- 7.03 Through our influencing work, we seek to improve understanding of the condition not just in the health and social care sector, but throughout society. We want to ensure that people with osteoporosis receive equality of access, equality of treatment, and equality of outcomes, whether out shopping, using public transport, or participating in leisure activities.

8.00 Review and Compliance

- 8.01 Concerns and informal complaints regarding the implementation of this policy should be brought in the first instance to the Corporate Services Director.
- 8.02 For existing employees, if concerns are not able to be resolved informally, the **Grievance Procedure** should be used.
- 8.03 For anyone else, the **Complaints Procedure** should be used.
- 8.04 For employees and job applicants, where the charity's own formal procedures are not able to resolve the matter, and the complainant believes they have a legal case against the charity, they should contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
- 8.05 For anyone else, where the charity's own formal procedures are not able to resolve the matter, and the complainant believes they have a legal case against the charity, they should contact their local Citizens Advice bureau, or the Equality Advisory and Support Service.
- 8.06 This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there is a legislative change which triggers an earlier review.

Glossary

Discrimination – the prejudicial treatment of different categories of people – either directly or indirectly. Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

- direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
- indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

Diversity – the fact of many different types of people being included.

Equality – the right of different groups of people to have a similar status and receive the same opportunities.

Equalities Act (2010) - the Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

Inclusion – the act of including someone as part of a group.

Protected characteristics. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of: age; being or becoming a transsexual person; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion, belief or lack of religion/belief; sex; and sexual orientation. These are called 'protected characteristics'.