

Policy name:	Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity Policy
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1. General Statement

- 1.1 Mind Monmouthshire is committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment and the services it provides. No user of Mind Monmouthshire's services, employee, trustee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment because of :- sex, colour, ethnic origin, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue. The Organisation understands it's responsibilities under the following legal Acts:-
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the 2000 amendment
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - Commission for Race Equality Code of Practice
 - The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 - The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
 - Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
 - Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission (and CRE).
- (and subsequent amendments to these)
- 1.2 As an employer and provider of a service to the community, Mind Monmouthshire accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, trustees and service users to ensure that no other service user, volunteer, trustee or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on grounds stated in Para. 1.1 of this policy.

- 1.4 Mind Monmouthshire recognises that some clients and users of its service may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Mind Monmouthshire's Equal Opportunities Policy. The organisation will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible an approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.
- 1.5 This policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant codes of practice.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1 The Executive Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all employees, trustees, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Mind Monmouthshire to do everything they can to ensure that this policy works in practise.
- 2.2 Mind Monmouthshire will bring to the attention of all employees, job applicants, trustees, volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it. Reference to the policy should be included in contract documents with outside agencies.
- 2.3 Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in Mind Monmouthshire projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Mind Monmouthshire's Equal Opportunity Policy and adhere to it while working as Mind volunteers.

3. Positive Action

- 3.1 Mind Monmouthshire believes that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that positive steps shall be taken. Mind Monmouthshire is committed to:
- i) recognising and developing potential which has not been used before because of past discrimination and disadvantage.
 - ii) encouraging access and applications from under represented groups.
- 3.2 Every effort will be made to ensure that the services offered by Mind Monmouthshire reflect the composition of the community it serves and will record service user statistics by age, gender and ethnicity in its Annual Report. This objective will be written into the current Business Objectives.

4. Dealing with Complaints (To be used in conjunction with Mind Monmouthshire's Complaints Procedure and Grievance Procedure)

- 4.1 If any service user, trustee, volunteer or employee feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter further with either:
- i) The line Manager in case of staff
 - ii) The manager/key worker of the project where the alleged discrimination occurred.
- 4.2 All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.
- 4.3 Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will be treated as serious and may involve using the disciplinary Procedure.

5. Recruitment

- 5.1 All job vacancies will be advertised internally to encourage service users and volunteers to apply.
- 5.2 Mind Monmouthshire will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirement of the job and do not imply sex or other stereotyping.
- 5.3 All job vacancies will state that Mind Monmouthshire is seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer. A copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy Statement will form part of all application packs.
- 5.4 Mind Monmouthshire will take positive steps to redress imbalances in its workforce.
- 5.5 Person specifications will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid.
- 5.6 In the interests of operating an effective Equal Opportunities Policy, Mind Monmouthshire will monitor certain information about job applicants. All such information will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff.

6. Training Opportunities

- 6.1 Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job or personal development.

- 6.2. Training Courses will be non-residential and in working hours whenever possible.
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of every individual member of staff to participate in equal opportunities training that is provided.

7. Working Conditions

Pregnancy

Mind Monmouthshire recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will consider sympathetically any requests for such changes.

Antenatal Care

Time off with pay will be given to both full time and part time employees to attend antenatal classes, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary. See also the Special Leave Policy.

Flexible Hours and Job Sharing

Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full time and part time employees with no qualifying length of service, to facilitate the caring of children and other dependants. Request for job sharing or part time working to meet employee's needs for shorter hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

7.4 Disabled Access

Mind Monmouthshire will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all its premises have disabled access. (At present Mind Monmouthshire premises do not have wheelchair access. It is Mind Monmouthshire's aim to provide access when funds and conditions permit.) When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

8. Use of Language

- 8.1 Staff, service users, volunteers and trustees will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles;
- i) disabled groups and/or individuals with special needs

- ii) any race, culture or religion
- iii) a person's sexual orientation
- vi) women and/or men
- v) a person's age.

8.2 Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

8.3 All materials used or developed by Mind Monmouthshire will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

9. Sexual Harassment

9.1 No member of staff, trustee, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

9.2 This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- i) verbal sexual abuse
- ii) physical contact
- iii) repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

9.3 If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user, trustee, volunteer or employee who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.