

Voice of Freedom

c/o Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, 40 Bank Street, London, E14 5DS7
e voicefreedomproject@gmail.com t +44 203 287528 w www.voiceoffreedom.org

Diversity Inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Statement

1. Voice of Freedom is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment or engagement with individuals. You and any applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).
2. We will seek to ensure that our services and resources are relevant to all individuals accessing and using Voice of Freedom's services ('Service Users') and are perceived by them as being so.
3. The aim of the policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of Staff or any Service User is unlawfully discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds above.
4. The Trustees and the CEO have primary responsibility for ensuring equal opportunities in service-delivery and employment practice. All Staff must adhere to this policy in the course of their work, monitor it on a day-to-day basis and report on its operation to the Trustee Board.
 5. This policy covers all employees, workers, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, agency workers, and Trustees ('Staff'). This policy does not form part of any Staff contract and we may amend it at any time.

Voice of Freedom Responsibilities

We will:

1. Communicate the policy to all Staff and any members of advisory groups through the use of any of the following: handbooks, policies, notice boards, circulars, written notification to individual employees or other methods of communication as appropriate at the discretion of Voice of Freedom.
2. Discuss and, if applicable and where appropriate, agree with any employee representatives any proposed changes in the policy's contents and implementation.
3. Make it known to all applicants and, where appropriate, to all Service Users.
4. Ensure that any disciplinary and complaints procedures incorporate principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
5. Regularly examine existing procedures and criteria, including recruitment practices, and any terms and conditions of employment and change them where they are actually or potentially discriminatory.
6. Ensure that the organisation is kept up-to-date and within the law.
7. Provide training and guidance to enable Staff to carry out the policy and provide specific training for relevant decision-makers, including without limitation members of the Board of Trustees where appropriate.
8. Regularly monitor the application of the policy.
9. Report annually on progress in implementing the policy and on any necessary changes.

Discrimination

1. You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including without limitation current and former Staff, job/role/volunteer applicants, Service Users, volunteers, suppliers, donors and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (including without limitation when dealing with volunteers, donors, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on any work-related matters such as without limitation trips, functions or events including social events.
2. 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.
 - **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.
 - **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.

Recruitment and Selection of 'Staff'

1. Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as without limitation 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 reasonably possible.
2. Vacancies for employment should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.
3. 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.
4. Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before an offer of a job, contractor role or volunteer position, as applicable, 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 role (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, 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.

Disabilities

1. 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.

Part-time and fixed-term work

1. 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.

Breaches of this policy

1. We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our relevant policies and/or any terms we may have in place with you. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct.
2. If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter in accordance with the Complaints policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
3. You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our relevant policies and/or any terms we may have in place with you.

Services Provision

1. We will work actively towards ensuring that our services and resources are relevant to all Service Users.
2. We will examine each area of work to determine whether:
 - The service is offered in an accessible and relevant way
 - Alternative methods would be more appropriate
 - Additional Services should be developed
 - There are any practices/procedures that are discriminatory
3. All written resources for groups and individuals produced by Voice of Freedom will reflect the mixed community within which we work and stereotyped images of particular groups will not be reinforced. All Staff and volunteers must ensure that their work reflects these principles.
4. Service Users must have easy access to information about Voice of Freedom's services which may involve making materials available where appropriate in a variety of media, e.g. in large print or electronically.
5. It is also recognised that Voice of Freedom will not be able to meet all the demands made upon its services.
6. Additionally, it is recognised that there may from time to time be complaints against members of Staff or the service. The Complaints policy will be available on the VOF website.

Last updated: 22 October 2021

