

SLMHA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Overview

We, Skye and Lochalsh Mental Health Association, believe that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. Discrimination will not be tolerated in the carrying out of our services, within our groups or in our workplaces.

Our Trustees believe that the success of our organisation depends on content relationships between participants, everyone feeling welcome and at ease and free from worry. This is regardless of whether they be a trustee, employee, freelance contractor, volunteer or service user.

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all society and for all of our participants to feel respected and able to give their best.

Our organisation - in providing services and facilities - is committed to ensuring there is no unlawful discrimination against any of its participants.

Any participant who feels they have an issue with their conditions, or the attitude of another should be able to bring that issue to the attention of the SLMHA board of trustees.

We wish to emphasise that anyone seeing or hearing anything inappropriate or untoward happening to another participant must feel able to advise the individual accordingly and/or to bring it to the attention of the Trustees.

Policy Statement

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

SLMHA is committed to creating a diverse space, with equal opportunities for all members of its community and for participation to be without any discrimination or bias either direct or indirect.

SLMHA recognises and challenges the existence of discrimination in society and is fully committed to operating to benefit all people.

SLMHA will make sure that all practices in relation to its activities are free of any kind of discrimination or bias on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

Commitments

SLMHA is committed to

Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation or unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in all areas, and prevent bullying,

harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

Making sure that all staff understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, against fellow employees, participants, customers, suppliers and the public

Dealing with acts of misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures and taking appropriate action. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, helping and encouraging them to develop their full potential.

Making decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

Reviewing and updating practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and conforming with changes in the law.

Monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. This will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, is working in practice, reviewing annually, and taking action to address any issues.

HUMAN RIGHTS

SLMHA is committed to respecting everyone's human rights in all aspects of its activities. We believe that we have a responsibility to ensure human rights are understood and observed in the area that we work, including those of suppliers, including those who are based outside our main country of operation.

We are guided by the principles set out in the UN Declaration of Human Rights

This applies to all SLMHA personnel, including all directors, officers, employees, contractors and clients. It is expected that suppliers, including self-employed practitioners, advisors and service providers comply with the law as a minimum and should do their utmost to comply with the principles of this policy.

This policy is intended to protect SLMHA, its members, personnel and business partners. Given its importance, any breach of this policy may result in an investigation under SLMHA Discipline and Grievance policy

If anyone associated with our operations believes that someone, either within SLMHA or one of our suppliers or a contractor is violating this policy and/or the law, they are asked to report it immediately to our charity trustees.

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to ensure that all personnel involved in our operations are made aware of or provided with this policy. Supplier research and assessments ensure human rights are adequately respected and ensure continued compliance with this policy.

The following main areas of responsibility have been identified in carrying out Human Rights Due Diligence within the operation of SLMHA

Equality and Diversity: Our commitment is to provide a safe and inclusive environment where all people are treated fairly and with respect.

Labour rights: We provide fair working conditions for our employees including terms and conditions of employment, remuneration, working hours, resting time, holiday entitlements, maternity/paternity leave and benefits; we comply with all applicable legislation.

We choose to engage suppliers and contractors who comply with all applicable local legislation as well as adhering to our values, supporting us in the delivery of our commitment.

Wages: SLMHA is committed to ensuring that our direct employees are not paid lower than the agreed living wage.

Forced Labour (Slavery): SLMHA has a policy of zero-tolerance towards acts of modern slavery which are unlawful and are a violation of fundamental human rights.

Safe and Healthy Workplace: SLMHA is committed to delivering high standards of health and safety management and aims to continually improve its performance, always seeking to reduce risk. We believe in always doing the right thing and in doing it safely, without unnecessary risk to people's health and will comply with all relevant legislation.

Vulnerable Participants: SLMHA is committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our activities and relationships. We acknowledge that the individual circumstances of some of our participants may leave them significantly less able to represent their own interests and more likely to suffer harm. We commit to putting in place tailored and flexible processes and practices that will support the provision of a suitable level of facilities and communication to enable more vulnerable participants to engage with SLMHA

BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT

Bullying and harassment of any kind are in nobody's interest and will not be tolerated. Such behaviour need not necessarily happen face to face - bullying or harassment may occur through speech, gesture, written communications, email and phone.

SLMHA takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, service users, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Bully and Harassment is defined as:

- a. Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour.
- b. An abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or denigrates the recipient.

Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered as banter, jokes or firm management by another. There are, therefore, grey areas where incidents need to be nipped in the bud by advice before formal action needs to be taken. This is especially important if incidents are trivial but risk being repeated. For the avoidance of doubt the Trustees therefore wish to state that the following actions are unacceptable:

- a. Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour

- b. Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- c. Ridiculing or demeaning someone by setting them up to fail
- d. Treating someone differently from another participant
- e. Unwelcome sexual advances – such as touching, standing too close or displaying offensive materials
- g. Deliberately undermining a competent participant by overloading and constant criticism.

GRIEVANCE & DISCIPLINARY

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in the staff handbook and on the notice board. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

PROCEDURE

Related policies: this policy should be read in association with the following documents: SLMHA Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures, SLMHA Recruitment & Procurement Procedures, SLMHA Bullying & Harassment Procedures and SLMHA Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures.

Training and awareness: All board members, volunteers and staff will take part in annual training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and treating people fairly. There will also be job specific training as required.

Control: This policy is monitored through regular auditing and/or workplace inspections as appropriate.

Review: SLMHA will review this policy on a scheduled basis and may, at any time, publish updated or revised versions of this policy to reflect developments in the organisation, or changes to legislation or procedures.

The SLMHA Trustees are responsible for reviewing and maintaining this policy, and ensuring it remains current.

AGREEMENT

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed at a meeting of the Board of Directors on 3 March 2022 and is reviewed annually