



Support and action for people affected by mental illness

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Policy Statement

NSF (Scotland) recognises that certain groups and individuals within society experience discrimination both directly and indirectly. We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities in employment and service delivery, as it affects individuals and groups whether they are service users or workers.

NSF (Scotland) is committed to opposing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, gender, sexuality/sexual orientation, disability, age, history of physical or mental ill-health, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, responsibility for dependants, trade union activity and political belief. We are taking active steps to implement policies and procedures which counter discrimination, and recognise that progress towards these goals requires the participation and commitment of all NSF (Scotland) staff.

NSF(Scotland) accepts the statutory requirements laid down in the Sex Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and all subsequent Employment Equality Regulations.

Policy Aims

The main objectives of the policy are to:

- a) promote equality of employment opportunities;
- b) ensure that NSF (Scotland) promotes the policy in the forms of membership, service delivery, publications, publicity, etc.;
- c) actively encourage people from under-represented groups to take up membership of NSF (Scotland) and to serve on Board of Management committees; and
- d) apply relevant supportive employment procedures and practices and develop appropriate training programmes.

To achieve these objectives, NSF (Scotland) will develop an ongoing programme of action and will attempt to make available resources to ensure the full and effective implementation of this policy. This programme of action will be determined on an annual basis.

Responsibilities of NSF (Scotland)

- a) Implementing and co-ordinating the policy through the NSF (Scotland) Operations Manager;
- b) Reviewing and developing NSF (Scotland)'s employment and service delivery procedures and practices with workers, Board members and service users;
- c) Reviewing and developing training courses and programmes of action in association with workers, Board members and service users; and
- d) Providing guidance and information to workers, Board members and service users.

Ensuring Effectiveness

NSF (Scotland) makes the following commitments to ensure effectiveness of the policy:

- a) to consult on the content and implementation of the NSF (Scotland)'s policy with all relevant agencies and users of its services;
- b) to ensure that NSF (Scotland)'s policy is made known to all workers, Board members, members of Project Advisory Committees, job applicants and service users;
- c) to provide training and guidance for workers, as appropriate, to ensure that they understand and are able to discharge their responsibilities in law and under NSF(Scotland)'s policy;
- d) to examine and regularly review employment and service delivery procedures and practices with a view to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination;
- e) to ensure that each NSF (Scotland) project, the National Office and the Board of Management produces annual targets as part of the ongoing programme of action to implement this policy;
- f) to ensure that workers' actions, in the provision of services, are carried out in a non-discriminatory manner in terms of this policy;
- g) to use the positive action provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 and other legislation where appropriate, to ensure quality of opportunity in employment and service delivery;

- h) to ensure that applications for funding for services include any costs incurred in pursuance of the implementation of this policy; and
- i) to ensure that NSF (Scotland) complies with and uses the positive action provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Responsibilities of Workers

Individual workers acting on behalf of NSF (Scotland) have responsibility in law and in the terms of NSF (Scotland)'s policy for assisting in the prevention of discrimination.

In particular, workers:

- a) are required to co-operate with measures introduced by NSF (Scotland) to promote equal employment opportunities and eliminate discrimination;
- b) must not themselves discriminate against other workers or recipients of our services;
- c) must not induce or attempt to induce other workers, Board members, trade unions or service recipients to practise discrimination;
- d) are required to draw to the attention of senior workers any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- e) must not victimise any individuals who have made complaints or who have provided information about discrimination;
- f) must not harass, abuse or intimidate other workers or service users on any grounds or otherwise act in a discriminatory manner;
- g) must ensure that no actions are undertaken in their dealings with members of the public which could be held to be discriminatory in terms of this policy; and
- h) must ensure that the work of NSF (Scotland) reflects a commitment to equal opportunities.

Discriminatory acts or omissions committed by workers of NSF (Scotland) will be viewed seriously and will normally result in disciplinary action being taken which may include dismissal.

Monitoring

NSF(Scotland) will develop and maintain procedures and systems for monitoring and reviewing the progress of the equal opportunities policy in practice. This will involve the collection of relevant information and statistics on the composition of the workforce, job applicants, service users and management committees, as appropriate.

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