OP03 – Equality & Diversity Policy

RISE Learning Zone.
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Policy Statement

RISE is committed to providing an environment of service delivery and employment that promotes equality and diversity and combats discrimination in all its forms.

RISE values diversity, welcomes interest from all sections of the community and is committed to building and reinforcing a culture where people treat each other with respect. Respect is one of RISE's core values and therefore should be central to all we do.

RISE serves and employs people of many different backgrounds and works with many different communities. Our approach to equality and diversity forms part of the framework within which other policies, procedures and practices are developed and implemented.

RISE aims not to discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or non belief, ethnicity, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership or any other reason and aims to promote equal opportunity, community cohesion and good relations between people and groups of all backgrounds, lifestyles and beliefs.

All allegations of unlawful discrimination and harassment will be treated seriously. Any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment is totally unacceptable and such behaviour by staff is considered a disciplinary offence. All staff will receive training on Equality and Diversity.

Scope

This Policy applies to the Association's employment and volunteering practices, governance, service planning, access and service delivery. Contractors and organisations that we work in partnership with are also expected to support the principles of this policy.

LEGISLATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

This policy is intended to comply with all relevant legislation and good practice.
Relevant legislation includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
  Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986 (amended 1999) Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (taking account of relevant exclusion clauses as laid out in The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
  Protection from Harassment Act 1997
  The Human Rights Act 1998
  Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations
- 2000
  Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2010 (encompasses and replaces all of the above and other associated equalities legislation)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025

Roles & Responsibilities
All employees, managers, board members and volunteers are responsible for:

- Complying fully with the policy, and working with colleagues to deliver services in line with the policy.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour to service users, residents and customers. Ensuring that they are not involved in or collude with unlawful discrimination or
- harassment, bullying or victimisation.
  Challenging inappropriate behaviour or language as necessary.
- Actively participating in equality and diversity training, service reviews, equality impact assessments and equality action plans as required.

Managers are also responsible for:

- Ensuring that equalities considerations are integral to all policy decisions and objectives with regards to service delivery, purchasing, procurement, pay, employment practices, and volunteering.
- Evaluating services, taking account of equalities issues and monitoring information and taking appropriate action to ensure diverse needs of service users and customers are met.
- Dealing effectively with alleged breaches of this policy, by staff, volunteers, service users, residents and customers.
- Implementing all RISE policies in accordance with the principles of this policy.
- Positively promoting this policy and ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour, setting standards for staff and volunteers.
- Supporting people who are facing unlawful discriminatory behaviour from service users, volunteers or staff.

Board Members are also responsible for:

- Ensuring that equalities issues are considered in relation to all issues of governance, policy development, service development, remuneration and employment.
- Reviewing monitoring information.
  Working towards a diverse membership base for the Board of Directors and
- members.

Equality in Employment

RISE is committed to ensuring that we provide equality of opportunity to all employees and volunteers. We will work to ensure that we promote
equality of opportunity and good working relationships and do not unlawfully discriminate against any job applicant, volunteer or employee for any reason. We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our recruitment and selection policies and procedures are fair
- so that the best people are appointed to deliver our services.
  Reviewing posts with Genuine Occupational Requirements (GOR's) each time
- they become vacant to ensure the GOR is still relevant.
  Considering applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience,
- appropriate qualifications, skills and abilities.
  Ensuring that all employees receive fair treatment and pay in relation to their
- employment.
  Monitoring our workforce composition, recruitment activity, pay levels and other

- employment practices to assess the impact of our practices on different groups and individuals.
- Considering making reasonable adjustments to practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled employee, volunteer or applicant is not put at a disadvantage due to being disabled.
- Where someone becomes disabled, making every effort through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment as appropriate to enable them to remain employed by RISE.
- Not discriminating against anyone on the basis that they look after or care for someone who is disabled.
- Taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination, and offering support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents.
- Being committed to non discriminatory employment practices in all areas.

Equality in Service Delivery

RISE is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of its services. We will achieve this by:

- Providing training and guidance for employees so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people and understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.
- Ensuring that residents, service users and community groups are encouraged to engage with and participate in the planning and delivery of services where appropriate.
- Delivering services which are relevant, of the highest possible quality, sustainable and accessible.
- Providing clear information about our services and, where necessary, in a variety of formats.
- Assessing the impact of and monitoring our services to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate and identifying where improvements can be made.
- Considering making reasonable adjustments to practices, equipment and premises to ensure that disabled people are not put at a disadvantage due to being disabled.
- Encouraging our partnership agencies, contractors and other stakeholders to uphold the principles of this policy and have their own Equality and Diversity policies.
- Ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective

Implementation

As appropriate RISE will undertake Equality Impact Assessments on certain policies, practices, procedures and services in order to identify unfair discrimination and take action as appropriate.

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Appendix
GLOSSARY OF USEFUL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TERMS

Age covers everyone. In certain cases, eg licensing laws, health and safety laws, other legislation will override equalities legislation eg it is lawful to refuse someone a job serving alcohol if they are under 18.

Bullying is defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, an abuse of power or unfair sanctions that make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable

Direct Discrimination is when someone is unlawfully treated less favourably than someone else due to a legally protected characteristic and there is no objective justification for this eg refusing to employee someone as a receptionist because they are too old.

Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some long term illnesses are also covered. Learning disabilities and people with facial disfigurements may also be included.

Discrimination by Association – where someone is discriminated against on the basis that they are "associated with" someone in a protected group eg being discriminated against because your child is disabled.

Diversity means understanding and respecting the differences that exist amongst people both within and beyond legal requirements. It is about treating people as individuals and making them feel valued and respected.

Dual Discrimination – Direct discrimination due to a combination of two protected characteristics eg age and gender.

Equality is providing and promoting equality of opportunity. It is not treating everyone in the same way. Equality is about giving people fair access and opportunity whilst recognising that everyone is different with different needs and requirements.

Equality Impact Assessments – are assessments, based on evidence, that systematically assess and record the actual, potential or likely impact of a service, policy, project or plan on different groups of people. The findings are then used to make any required improvements or changes.

Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) / Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR)
A GOQ / GOR applies where there is an exception under the relevant legislation, to allow for the recruitment, training, promotion or transfer of a person of a specific group due to the demands of the particular post eg a woman to work in a women–only refuge.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. This may include non-verbal behaviour, inappropriate action, comments, physical contact or banter against people.

Indirect Discrimination is when there is a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone but might disadvantage a particular group, and which cannot be justified in relation to the job eg an unjustified height requirement could adversely impact on females.

Race covers ethnic or national origins, nationality, race and colour.

Religion & Belief is defined as any religion or religious belief or non belief. Certain philosophical beliefs are also covered.

Sex covers men, women and transgender men and women (planning, undergoing or having completed gender reassignment or living as a gender different to that at birth). Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding also have specific legislative protection against discrimination.

Sexual Orientation This includes lesbians, gay people, heterosexuals and bi-sexual people.

Victimisation is when someone is treated less favourably or discriminated against because they have pursued or intended to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years or as necessary, by Kirsty Sanders, Senior Leadership Team,

Full Policy Sign Off

Signed	
Printed	Kirsty Sander
Position	Director
Dated	01.09.2025