

Registered Charity Number 1135144

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction

Work Stress Solutions (WSS) is committed to setting standards to achieve equality and value diversity in all our working practices. All clients, trustees, staff, volunteers, and course facilitators have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and have their cultural needs considered. This policy sets out how we intend to do this.

Our commitments to equality are

- Listening, responding, and working together with clients, course facilitators and communities to provide an appropriate and effective service.
- Continually improving and building positive practice.
- Eliminating all forms of discrimination.
- Providing a service that is accessible to all and support for individuals to enjoy and access equally – within the terms of our mandate.
- Developing environments where people are valued and respected.
- Providing learning and developing opportunities for all our clients.
- Working with other agencies to ensure our commitments to equality are delivered.
- Action will be taken to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a timely and effective manner (as set out in our Complaints Handling Policy).

- All data recorded, collected, and deleted will be following our new Compliance and Data Handling Policy which reflects the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR May 18)
- Most of the new law is based on current legislation which has been streamlined but there are some important differences.

To find out more: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

We will ensure that equality occurs within our employment practices and in providing a service by:

- Providing fairness and quality of service.
- Recognising that everyone is different and respecting those differences equally.
- Challenging discrimination in a manner that does not exclude individuals or make them feel victimised.

Unacceptable practices

These include direct, indirect, and institutional discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and can be intentional or unintentional.

Direct discrimination occurs when an individual or group receives less favourable treatment, for unjustified reasons on the grounds of their race, disability, gender etc.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criteria or practice is applied equally to all, but has a disproportionate impact on an individual or a particular group and puts them at a disadvantage.

Institutional discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their background or experience. It can be seen in our attitudes, behaviours and procedures that amount to discrimination through

unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and stereotyping which disadvantage people.

Victimisation occurs when an individual, who has made a complaint of discrimination, is harassed and/or treated less favourably because of their complaint.

Harassment occurs when unwanted conduct, including physical, verbal, and non-verbal abuse occurs because of an individual's gender, race, disability etc.

What we will do to tackle discrimination?

- Ensure that once a complaint is received it is responded to either in writing or verbally within 7 working days of its receipt (see Complaints Handling Policy flow-chart).
- Ensure that the individual making the complaint is informed of the outcomes as soon as is practically possible.
- Halt any discriminatory practice as soon as it is identified.
- Support individuals of discrimination.
- Support individuals to identify and overcome their prejudices.
- Support individuals to develop personal values and belief systems that will equip them to value the beliefs and culture of others.
- To ensure that research is carried out to identify needs, so all decisions and planning are based on facts and not assumptions.
- Ensuring appropriate training or instruction is given so that clients and WSS trustees, staff, volunteers, and course facilitators understand that it is not about treating everyone the same, but about recognising and respecting differences and treating each other with respect and dignity.

Responsibility

All clients and WSS trustees, staff, volunteers, and course facilitators have a responsibility to act following this policy. They should be made aware of its contents and their responsibilities.

Visitors should also be made aware of this policy and its procedure to treat others with respect and dignity at all times.

The Project Coordinator and trustees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is delivered and that we promote equality.

Monitoring of Policy

To ensure the effectiveness of this policy we will carry out regular monitoring. Ensuring that our services are accessible to all and that our practices are free from discrimination.

We will also seek feedback from clients and practitioners as part of our commitment to listening and continually improving what we do.

Policy Review Date: This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if legislation changes.