

Equality and Diversity Policy

June 2006

Policy Statement

YouthNet is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of our work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all our stakeholders.

The Equality and Diversity Policy underpins all our other policies and procedures. All organisation policies, remuneration opportunities, hours of work, performance review schemes, disciplinary or other procedures, and benefits are designed to promote equal opportunity and protection for all staff, contractors and volunteers.

We believe that diversity is a means to achieve our ambitions. Diversity is about outreach, inclusion and service delivery as well as the people we employ and involve in our work.

The overall aim of this policy is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Ensure that we treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respect
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote equality of access
- Provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment - for staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors
- Integrate our values into our work

This policy applies to every employee, prospective employee, volunteer or person connected with YouthNet, and to the services we provide.

Status of the policy

This policy forms part of the formal contract of employment for staff and part of the formal agreement between volunteers and YouthNet. All members of the organisation must abide by this policy - albeit that those in senior or managerial positions or with specific responsibilities for recruitment, selection, training, appraisal and promotion should be especially mindful of the policy. Any failure to comply could result in disciplinary proceedings.

Implementing the policy

We will do our best to make our Equality and Diversity Policy fully effective by:

- Actively promoting it
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing all our job selection procedures and criteria and change them if they result in unfair discrimination
- Making sure that all employees and job applicants, contractors and volunteers know about this policy
- Taking appropriate action, using agreed procedures, if any employee breaches this policy

- Providing training and guidance, particularly for line managers, to make sure that they understand this policy and their legal responsibilities
- Monitoring recruitment and employment statistics to identify under-representation

Equality and diversity at work

We are committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and demonstrating that we value the diversity of our workforce. In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policies, procedures and practices, we will:

- Do our best not to unfairly discriminate against any job applicant or employee and, when recruiting, only to consider factors which are relevant to someone's ability to perform the job well
- Aim to create a workforce that is as diverse as the community we serve
- Do our best to treat all employees and job applicants fairly in relation to all our employment policies and procedures and to meet any reasonable and appropriate additional needs they may have
- Value and respect the identities and cultures of our staff, including volunteers, freelancers and students etc
- Do everything we can to work towards a workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment and will act promptly on any complaints of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation
- Provide a safe working environment
- Make the workplace, and information about work, as accessible as we can for all our employees
- Give our employees clear information about job selection and training and encourage all employees to reach their full potential
- Make sure that we work according to the relevant employment legislation and statutory codes of practice
- Continue to develop good practice employment policies and procedures over and above those required by legislation
- Apply this Equality and Diversity Policy through the organisation's recruitment and selection process, training programmes, grievance procedures and all other employment policies
- Do all we can to give employees and job applicants access to complaint procedures if they feel unfairly treated

Commitment to users

Service users and potential service users can expect YouthNet to aim to:

- Design and deliver appropriate, accessible and effective services to all members of the community (in line with memorandum and arts)
- Work in partnership with others to promote equality and diversity
- Make sure that we provide services that comply with relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice

- Continue developing good practice policies and procedures over and above that required by legislation
- Act promptly if we receive any complaints about the way we provide services

Responsibility for implementing the policy

The Chief Executive has lead responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, but all employees have a responsibility to work from it in all areas of their work, individually and collectively.

The Senior Managers, and all employees with supervisory responsibility, have responsibility for implementing, monitoring and promoting this policy.

The Central Services Department develops YouthNet's equality policies and advises on all equality and diversity issues. Central Services will monitor this policy regularly to assess how effective it is being implemented across the organisation.

All employees must make sure they do not:

- Discriminate against anyone
- Persuade or pressure another employee to discriminate
- Harass, bully or abuse other employees or the public for any reason
- Condone harassment

If anyone witnesses a discriminatory incident at work, they have a duty of care to others to challenge such behaviour and practice.

If an employee does not follow these and other requirements of the Equality and Diversity Policy, we will usually deal with it under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Monitoring

The Head of Central Services will review this Policy, at least annually, to ensure it is appropriate and responsive to relevant legislation. Amendments to the Policy and Scheme will be made, where appropriate, in the light of experience or changes in guidance and/or legislation.