



## **Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

### **Purpose**

As an employer and as a provider of services for the citizens of Brighton and Hove, we embrace diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities, including recruitment, promotion, interviews, selection, pay, appraisal, training, discipline and dismissal.

Our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy has five inter-related purposes.

First, it is designed to ensure that all who act on behalf of Impetus, including staff, volunteers and trustees are fully aware of equal opportunity law.

Second, it is designed to ensure that all personnel policies and procedures, including recruitment, pay, appraisal and promotion are based entirely on an individual's ability to carry out the requirements of their post, and to do their job well.

Third, it ensures that Impetus celebrates diversity, recognising and respecting individual difference, and valuing the varying qualities which each individual brings to their job, and to the organisation.

Fourth, the policy reflects our commitment to guard against unfair discrimination for its service users, and seeks to ensure the accessibility of its services through both its physical environment and its communication strategy.

Fifth, all staff, volunteers and trustees are expected to promote the values of equal opportunities, and to be proactive in challenging expressed attitudes or behaviour, either within the organisation or in dealings with clients or other organisations, likely to be construed as in breach of the policy.

### **Scope**

This policy governs the behaviour of staff, volunteers, trustees, steering group members and members when acting within or on behalf of Impetus. This policy also applies to service users in dealings with Impetus.

## **Context / Background**

All organisations are obliged to comply with current equal opportunity law, including:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976, and Race Relations amendment Act 2000
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Directives on Religion and Belief (2003), Sexual Orientation (2003) and Age Discrimination (2006).

Additionally the MacPherson Report (1999) drew attention to Institutional Racism which, "...can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people".

Such ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping similarly manifest themselves in relation to disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, and attitudes towards individuals and groups who differ in some way from what is assumed to be mainstream culture. It is also important to be mindful that people who experience unfair discrimination do not all share the same needs and interests. There are wide differences within groups who experience disadvantage, as well as overlaps between them.

As an organisation Impetus serves this wide diversity of individuals, groups and communities, some who may perceive that they are subjected to unfair discrimination within society. It is within this context that Impetus seeks to develop and disseminate a robust Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy through which the sensitive and thoughtful application of the principles of Equalities are pervasive throughout the organisation in order to ensure that all individuals and groups feel welcomed within our organisation, and feel able to make use of its services.

## **Policy**

- The way we work, train and learn within Impetus will reflect both the Mission and Objectives of IMPETUS and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.
- Impetus will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in Impetus's work.

- Impetus will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.
- Impetus is an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No job applicant, employee, volunteer, trustee, member or service user should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital or civil partnership status or caring responsibility, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, political belief, religion, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, trade union activities or membership or non-membership. Nor will indirect discrimination be acceptable. This principle applies to all aspects of Impetus's activities as an employer and provider of services, including recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, benefits, facilities, procedures, disciplines, dismissals and all terms and conditions of employment.

### **Communication of the Policy**

The obligations of this policy apply to the behaviour of staff, volunteers, trustees, steering group members, members and service users. The benefits apply to those people and also to job applicants and anyone else with whom Impetus has dealings. The policy will be readily available to all affected by it. The policy will be published on the Impetus web site. It will be provided in electronic or printed form to anyone who reasonably requires this. Impetus will bring the policy to the attention of all staff, volunteers, trustees, steering group members, members, service users and job applicants when they are introduced to Impetus. When the policy changes, this will be notified to all staff, volunteers and trustees, and to any steering group members, members and service users who have requested such notification.

### **Recruitment, Interviews and Selection**

Impetus recruitment procedures will reflect the ethos of equality of opportunity. Care will be taken throughout the planning and process of recruitment to ensure that criteria are specific to post requirements, and do not include elements which may be construed as being unfairly restrictive or disadvantageous to any individual or group of potential applicants. The 'Impetus Equal Opportunities Code of Practice for the recruitment and selection of staff' details procedures to be followed in staff recruitment and selection.

## **Training**

Appropriate training will be provided to enable trustees, staff, volunteers and steering group members to perform their jobs effectively. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people. Briefing on the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for trustees, staff, volunteers and steering group members.

## **Responsibilities**

All staff will conform to this policy and ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and implemented within the organisation, and in relation to the many individuals, clients, groups and communities it serves. This includes being proactive in challenging behaviour or expressed attitudes likely to be construed as a breach of the policy. The organisation will support staff and volunteers who challenge unfair discrimination which occurs in connection with Impetus work.

Impetus's aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and willingness to tackle problems where they arise. Through training, publications, consultation, interaction with members and other activities, Impetus will ensure those it works with know our statements of policy.

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the trustees. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to the CEO. However, Impetus believes that all who work with or for Impetus have an individual responsibility to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application and to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality.

Where it appears that there may have been a breach of the policy, the CEO will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.

## **Grievances**

Any staff member or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through Impetus's established Grievance Procedure. Any job applicant or service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through Impetus's established Complaints Procedure. Impetus will not treat lightly or ignore grievances on the assumption that the complainant is over-sensitive about discrimination.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. All incidents of victimisation, harassment or direct discrimination by staff are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Incidents of indirect discrimination by staff will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Any volunteer, including trustees or members of any steering group, found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from Impetus's volunteer register. Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from Impetus.

### **Monitoring / Reviews**

Impetus will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

Where appropriate, statistics on Impetus's services will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters. We will review employee turnover and seek information on reasons for leaving. Local and national data will be used to benchmark our performance.

### **Applied Procedures**

- Equal Opportunities Code of Practice for the recruitment and selection of staff

### **Related Documents**

- Harassment Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Induction Procedure
- Appraisal and Development Scheme
- Supervision Contract
- Supervision feed back questionnaire

**Date Approved by Board: 25 March 2008**

**Review Date: March 2010**