

Equality Act 2010

A new Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010 and brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. The Act extends to cover the rights of staff and service users (including prospective staff and service users) and protects against discrimination because of nine protected characteristics.

An equality duty also came into force on 6 April 2011. In the exercise of our functions, the duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Each area has different legislative foundations, but all are combined into the Equality Act 2010.

Equality and Diversity policy

Introduction

The Junction Project is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment for our staff and a safe and supportive experience for our service users, where staff are equally valued and respected, and service users are encouraged to achieve their full potential. As an employment provider and service provider, we value the diversity of our staff and clients. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive environment for our service users and staff, and this is reflected in the core values of The Junction Project.

Diversity - We view the diversity of our staff and service users as a great asset.

Equity - We believe in the equitable treatment of all.

The Junction's Equality and Diversity Policy provides for coordination and implementation at a strategic level and is supported by additional policies that provide for a sector-wide integrated approach to equality and diversity.

Commitment to equality and diversity

In terms of its service users, The Junction believes that recovery will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of all staff and service users and enables them to achieve their full potential, to contribute fully, and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their time at the Junction Project.

To this end, the Junction acknowledges the following basic rights of all current and potential staff and service users:

- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- to receive encouragement to reach their full potential

These rights carry with them responsibilities and the Junction requires all associated with us to recognise these rights and to act in accordance with them in all dealings with fellow staff or service users. In addition, the Junction will comply with all relevant legislation and good practice.

No individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against. This includes, but not exclusively, discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Responsibility

The Board of Trustees, has overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the general duty to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Project manager is responsible for developing the policy and practice on behalf of the Junction and for advising staff in order to support compliance with equality legislation.

The Junction recognises that all of its staff and service users have a duty to support and uphold the principles contained in its Equality and Diversity Policy and supporting policies.

'Heterosexism'

Heterosexism can show itself through practices of institutions and also through the personal behaviour of individuals. These are known respectively as systematic

heterosexism and personal heterosexism. Expressions of dislike, hate or fear based on heterosexism are usually known as homophobia, although the terms lesophobia and biphobia are also coming into use.

The reactions to LGBT people can range from indifference to denied personal and professional opportunities, through to harassment and violence. These reactions often leave LGBT people feeling excluded and unsafe in a heterosexist environment.

Dealing with discrimination

The Junction is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive working environment for our staff and service users, where individuals are equally valued and respected. Bullying, harassment or victimisation of any individual will not be tolerated and any allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately under the relevant procedure.