



Equality Policy

April 2016

www.peopleknowhow.org

Version:	04
Date Approved:	April 2016
Scheduled Review Date:	May 2017

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1. Statement of Policy

This Policy document sets out People Know How's commitment to promoting Equality and we welcome the enrichment and cultural diversity that follow as a consequence of this Policy. We acknowledge that we have a duty – both moral and legal – to ensure that we are not unfairly discriminating in our employment and management practices, or in the services we provide.

By Equality we mean access to work (paid or voluntary), services, information and participation in the decision making process for everyone.

It is our policy to provide Equality to all irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity (including breastfeeding)
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

In addition, People Know How are positively committed to opposing discrimination against people on the grounds of colour, class, marital status, trade union activities, HIV status, unrelated criminal convictions, because they have dependents, or because they have been, or are, in contact with, mental health services.

2. Scope of Policy

This Policy will inform all activities of People Know How.

It covers all staff members, volunteers and services of People Know How. In particular, the Policy covers persons who share one or more of the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 as listed above.

3. Equality Commitments

This Policy will be achieved by promoting and demonstrating fairness and Equality of opportunity in:

- The provision of services
- The employment of staff and the recruitment of volunteers

Provision of Services

This means:

- Fair access to services
- Fair treatment while accessing and receiving services
- Equal quality of service offered
- Fair outcomes for all service users

As a service provider, we will:

- Place service users at the centre of policies and strategies in all our activities.
- Design and deliver services, wherever possible, that are appropriate, accessible and effective in meeting the diverse needs of service users.
- Engage with and listen to all sections of the community in identifying needs and in making decisions about the way our services are designed, planned and delivered.
- Provide relevant information about services in a way that is clear and available in a variety of appropriate formats to ensure accessibility for all sections of the community. In time, this will include material available in languages other than English.
- Use effective systems such as monitoring reviews, performance reviews, and community engagement to ensure that the quality and Equality of our services are consistently evaluated and improved and that all sections of the community are receiving fair access and outcomes.
- Monitor and evaluate service up-take in relation to all groups with the protected characteristics.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers at every level of the organisation understand what Equality in service provision means and apply it in their respective roles.
- Provide facilities and opportunities for members of the public to make complaints if they are dissatisfied with a service they have received or the way they were treated when accessing a service.

Employment of Staff and Recruitment of Volunteers

This means:

- Access to jobs and roles
- Fair treatment in involvement with People Know How
- Fair access to training and development opportunities
- The right of every staff member/volunteer:
 - Not to be discriminated against, harassed, victimised or bullied
 - To make a complaint when they feel they have been unfairly treated, harassed or bullied and to have their complaints acted upon
 - To challenge and bring discriminatory acts and behavior to the attention of an appropriate person for action
 - To be respected and valued for who they are and for what they contribute to the work of People Know How
 - Not to discriminate, harass, victimise or bully another staff member/volunteer; to respect other staff members/volunteers and value them for who they are and for what they contribute to the work of People Know How

People Know How's aim is to ensure Equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment and volunteering. People Know How will ensure that this applies across all its services.

People Know How will seek to promote Equality of opportunity in employment by ensuring that:

- All staff members/volunteers receive equal treatment in recruitment, employment and volunteering by People Know How.
- Positive measures are taken to reduce the effects of discrimination and disadvantage.
- All staff members/volunteers are aware of this Equality Policy and that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to its implementation, as well as the consequences of unacceptable behavior.
- All staff members/volunteers will be made aware of whom to contact if they believe they have been treated unfairly and wish to register a complaint.
- All allegations of discrimination, victimisation or harassment by staff members/volunteers of People Know How are investigated thoroughly and promptly in accordance with approved procedures. Acts of discrimination, victimisation or harassment by staff members/volunteers will be treated as serious disciplinary offences.
- We develop Equality monitoring covering applications, appointments, training, progression, redundancy, disciplinary action and discrimination and harassment complaints.
- We ensure accessible workplaces for all staff members, making reasonable adjustments to facilitate disabled people to be able to work, wherever possible, and for existing staff members/volunteers who become disabled.
- We retain flexible working practices to ensure that staff members/volunteers are supported in balancing work and other life commitments.

4. Implementation

The Board of Trustees of People Know How has specific responsibility for the implementation of this Policy. In addition, all staff members/volunteers are expected to abide by this Policy.

In order to implement this Policy, People Know How will:

- Communicate this Policy to staff members, volunteers, applicants and any others relevant (e.g. associates, agency workers).
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect to implementing this Equality Policy within job and volunteer descriptions as well as within the objectives of all staff members/volunteers.
- Provide Equality training and guidance to all staff members/volunteers as is appropriate, including within induction training for all new staff members/volunteers.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing applications for staff and volunteer recruitment will have training in Equality and non-discriminatory selection techniques.
- Incorporate Equality notices into general communications (e.g. within newsletters).
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations – such as subcontractors or other agencies – that they too will comply with this Policy in their dealings with People Know How, its service users and staff members/volunteers.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfill the objectives of this Policy.

5. Monitoring & Review

People Know How will work towards the aims of this Policy by establishing appropriate systems to monitor Equality in the provision of services, employment and volunteering.

The effectiveness of this Equality Policy will be reviewed annually and action taken as necessary. Where monitoring identifies under-representations of particular groups, particularly if this affects groups with protected characteristics, People Know How shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2017.

6. Complaints

Staff members/volunteers who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through People Know How's agreed Complaints Policy. A copy is available from People Know How at glenn.liddall@peopleknowhow.org All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Appendix A: Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

- Members of the Board of Trustees are expected to be fully committed to the aims and objectives of People Know How, and all its policies.
- Members of the Board of Trustees will be responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of this Equality Policy.
- In addition, the selection processes for members of the Board of Trustees should reflect this Equality Policy.
- The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring this Equality Policy is reviewed annually – unless new information requires an earlier review. If new information arises, the Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that this Equality Policy is reviewed as appropriate.

Individual Staff Members and Volunteers

While the prime responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with People Know How, individual staff members/volunteers also have certain responsibilities – individual attitudes and activities are of vital importance.

In particular, individual staff members/volunteers MUST:

- Co-operate with measures introduced by the Board of Trustees to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- Inform their Project Leader or Line Manager if they suspect that discrimination is taking place or where People Know How's Equality Policy is not being adhered.

Individual staff members/volunteers MUST NOT:

- Discriminate directly or indirectly; for example, as Project Leaders or Line Managers, or as persons responsible for selection decisions in recruitment, promotion, transfer, or training etc.
- Induce, attempt to induce, or put pressure on other staff members/volunteers to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Victimise, or attempt to victimise, individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints, helped others who have made complaints, or provided information on discrimination.
- Harass, abuse, or intimidate other staff members/volunteers or service users on the grounds of their age, race, sex, disability, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, a gender reassignment, their marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, their trade union activities, HIV status, criminal convictions, or because they have been, or are, in contact with, mental health services.

Appendix B: Recruitment Procedures

Staff Recruitment Procedure

1. Staff vacancies will be advertised as widely as possible to encourage applicants from all sections of the community.
2. Advertisements will contain the statement; "People Know How strives to be an Equality employer."
3. For each vacancy, a job description and person specification will be drawn up.
4. The selection panel members will all have received training in Equality and be fully informed regarding the recruitment procedure.
5. Each candidate should receive:
 - a) Application Form; b) Job Description; c) Information about People Know How and its Projects; d) A copy of the Equal Opportunity Policy; e) PVG Scheme information; and f) Information about Equality monitoring.
6. All applications will be assessed against the person specification and the shortlist will be drawn up on these criteria alone. All applications will also be included in the Equality monitoring process.
7. Interviews will be designed to:
 - Assess candidates' ability/suitability for the specific job.
 - Gain an insight into the candidates' personality.
 - Provide an opportunity for the candidate to gain further information about the job and working conditions.
8. The interview panel will ask comparable questions of each candidate, and will not ask irrelevant or discriminatory questions. Where appropriate questions may take the form of scenarios.
9. A record will be kept of each selection process (short listing and interviewing), and the final decision reached on the basis of the criteria laid down in the person specification.
10. All staff members will receive a written offer of employment and a contract of employment.
11. All unsuccessful candidates will be given the opportunity for feedback.
12. The above procedure will be reviewed as required and is taken in conjunction with People Know How's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

Volunteer Recruitment Procedure

1. All potential volunteers will be expected to complete a Volunteer Application Form and a Self-Disclosure Form. Staff will be able to assist in completion of these forms, if required. All volunteer applications will be included in the Equality monitoring process.
2. As well as requesting personal details for record purposes, the Volunteer Application Form will also attempt to establish why a person is interested in becoming a volunteer.
3. The Volunteer Application Form will ask for the names and addresses of two people who can be approached as references. Volunteers will also be requested to join the PVG scheme and complete a CRBS Disclosure Check (with costs covered by People Know How). Unless there are extenuating circumstances, voluntary work will not commence before this is complete.
4. All potential volunteers will undergo an induction/training period with a relevant staff member. The nature and extent of this training will vary according to the individual concerned.
5. If at any point during the recruitment process, the staff member (if necessary, with the support of the Board of Trustees) makes the judgment – on fully justified grounds – that a person is not suitable to become a volunteer, then that applicant may be rejected.
6. This procedure in no way detracts from this Equality Policy.

Appendix C: Legislation & Discrimination

Legislation

Equality Act 2010

This Act replaces previous anti-discrimination legislation. Although the responsibilities under the Act stay largely the same, there are some changes that will affect organisations that provide services to the public. These include the introduction of 'protected characteristics' under the headings age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (and its Amendments 1986 and 1999)

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marital status or to apply requirements or conditions that have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on people of a particular sex or marital status where these cannot be justified. It also applies to discriminatory employment advertising and makes it unlawful to apply pressure to discriminate or to aid discrimination by another person. The 1999 Amendment prohibits discrimination in employment and vocational training on grounds of gender reassignment.

Race Relations Act 1976 (and its Amendment 2000)

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin, or to apply requirements or conditions that have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on people of a particular racial group and which cannot be justified on non-racial grounds. It also applies to discriminatory employment advertising and makes it unlawful to apply pressure to discriminate or to aid discrimination by another person.

The 2000 Amendment strengthens the 1976 act by extending protection against racial discrimination by public authorities (this also includes those carrying out their functions). It also places an enforceable positive duty on public authorities to tackle institutional racism and promote racial equality (this part of the act implemented in May 2002 does not apply to voluntary bodies such as People Know How).

Equal Pay Act 1970 (and its Amendments)

This Act established the right of women and men to equal treatment in relation to contractual terms and conditions of employment when they are employed in the same, or broadly similar, work, or in work of equal value.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment and in the provision of goods and services. In addition to preventing employers from treating disabled people less favourably, the Act also puts a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to enable a disabled person to carry out their employment. Although the employment part of the act does not apply to employers with less than 20 staff members, such employers are encouraged to follow the good practice guidelines.

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (and its Amendments)

This Act imposes obligations on employers to provide access to premises and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and its Exceptions, Orders and Amendments)

This Act provides that if a convicted person completes a specified period without being convicted of further offences the conviction can be regarded as "spent". These sentences then do not have to be revealed and may not be used as grounds for exclusion from employment or promotion. However, certain occupations are not covered by the Act. If the work involves direct contact with people who are receiving a health service, then applicants must disclose any convictions they might have.

Types of Discrimination

Under the Equality Act 2010, organisations and employers need to be aware of seven types of discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** – This is where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic
- **Associative discrimination** – This is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by perception** – This is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
- **Indirect discrimination** – This can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone, but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.
- **Harassment** – This is behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Staff members and volunteers can complain about behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.
- **Harassment by a third party** – Employers are potentially liable for the harassment of staff member, volunteers or service users by people they don't themselves employ, i.e. a contractor.
- **Victimisation** – This occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under the legislation.