Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy ID Number: ORG025

Policy Passed by Trustees: Oct 2019

Review Date: Oct 2022

# Policy Statement

* 1. Restore recognises the importance of acknowledging and challenging discrimination and encouraging diversity in all its services. Restore’s members come from a wide range of backgrounds and we recognise the importance of reflecting this diversity within our own workforce, volunteers and trustees. We also recognise that people experiencing mental health issues often face discrimination when seeking access to mainstream services such as advice, housing, support, treatment, education and employment. It is also true that accessing mental health services is made more difficult due to stigma.
	2. Restore will actively promote cultural awareness and a respect for diversity in the services it provides, respecting the statutory requirements laid down in the Equality Act 2010. The law protects peoples from discrimination based on “protected characteristics” which are:
* Age
* Disability (which includes mental health problems)
* Sex (gender)
* Gender reassignment
* Marriage or civil partnership
* Pregnancy or maternity
* Race (ethnicity)
* Religion or belief

	1. It is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers and trustees to promote the application of this policy and constructively challenge discriminatory behaviour and processes. Breaches of this policy are likely to lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.
	2. Inclusion is about an individual’s experience within the workplace and in wider society and the extent to which a person feels valued and included. Restore is committed to creating an inclusive environment in which individual difference and the contributions of all are recognised and valued, which promotes dignity and respect and where no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated.
	3. Restore is committed to maintaining an environment where there are no differences in the experiences of staff or members, which we cannot justify.
	4. In particular, Restore undertakes to challenge unfair discrimination in the following areas:
* Recruitment of staff, volunteers and trustees
* Training and supervision
* Access to services for current and prospective members
* Service delivery
* Member involvement
* Monitoring
* Cultural awareness

# Recruitment of staff, volunteers and trustees

* 1. Restore will seek to ensure that applicants to all roles are treated fairly and according to this policy by:
* Ensuring that job descriptions and person specifications do not have requirements that unnecessarily exclude applicants from meeting the criteria
* Ensuring that where posts are advertised externally the advertisement is targeted to reach as wide a section of the population as possible, within available resources
* Seeking ways to encourage applications from under represented, vulnerable or disadvantaged groups whenever possible, including people with lived experience of mental health issues
* Ensuring that recruitment decisions are made according to the criteria set out in the job description and person specification
* Ensuring that all members of the shortlisting and interviewing panels are fully aware of this policy
* Ensuring that applicants’ special access needs are catered for where appropriate at interview
* Assessing candidates on their attitude in anti-discrimination and promoting diversity

# Training and supervision

* 1. Restore will provide appropriate development and training opportunities for staff, volunteers and trustees so that we can operate best practice in terms of fairness and promoting diversity. We will do this by:
* Ensuring that all aspects of this policy are reflected in induction processes
* Operating robust supervision and appraisal procedures to ensure that staff, volunteer and trustee practice is clearly informed by this policy and that training is identified where appropriate
* Adequately resourcing training and allowing appropriate time to undertake such training within work time where applicable
* Identifying serious concerns with staff and volunteer practice and addressing these through our staff management procedures such as appraisals, probationary period and Restore’s policies
* Undertaking a quarterly staff survey to ensure that Whistleblowing and Safeguarding policies are read and understood

# Access to Restore’s services

# Restore aims to ensure that all of our services are equally accessible to all those people who fulfil our service criteria by:

* Making the eligibility criteria widely available and ensuring that those referral procedures are flexible and offer the opportunity to review decisions on access
* Taking steps to make information available in relevant languages
* Assessing service environments for disability access and making reasonable adjustments where possible to support staff, volunteers and service users with disability access needs
* Undertaking robust monitoring of referrals and decision-making

	1. Restore also undertakes to promote our services to all parts of our local community. This includes proactive and targeted work to access particular groups, which are under-represented within our services, challenging stigma and finding ways of encouraging interaction with Restore. This may include creative methods such as taster sessions, informal social networking and outreach.

# Service Delivery

* 1. Restore will challenge anti-discriminatory practice, abuse, harassment and victimisation by:
* Making Restore’s members, staff, volunteers and trustees aware of their rights to report allegations of discrimination to ourselves and/or other relevant bodies
* Maintaining an accessible and fair Complaints Policy which enables anyone to complain if they experience discrimination or harassment within Restore services
* Ensuring that we have a robust Safeguarding Policy which is communicated to all
* Recognising that staff members from groups facing discrimination may have particular support needs and by responding flexibly to ensure workers are effectively supported to do their work
* Encouraging staff to use our Whistleblowing procedures
* Empowering staff to intervene if they witness unlawful abuse or harassment
* Reserving the right to withdraw services from a person if they behave in a discriminatory, disruptive or abusive manner
* Reporting unlawful discrimination to the police and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
* Investigating unfounded or malicious complaints or allegations and treating them as serious matter
* Ensuring grievance and disciplinary procedures reflect good practice and equal opportunities

# Member Involvement

* 1. Restore will actively promote the involvement of members in the work of the organisation by:
* Recognising that Restore’s members bring a valuable understanding of mental health issues and the recovery journey, as “experts by experience”
* Creating and evolving a variety of formal and informal means of consulting members about aspects of the way Restore services are developed and delivered:
	+ Member Council
	+ Feedback surveys
	+ Specific consultations about individual topics
	+ Complaints and suggestions procedures
* Ensuring that an effective Member Council works alongside Restore’s Executive Team and Trustees to act as a sounding board to guide good practice and strategic development
* Actively involving members in the recruitment of service delivery staff

# Monitoring

* 1. Restore will regularly review progress of our practice by:
* Maintaining and reviewing recruitment records annually to establish the profile of staff, volunteers and trustees (gender, age, ethnic origin and disability)
* Produce regular reports (at least 6 monthly) showing breakdown of information regarding members (gender, age, ethnic origin and disability)
* Considering the findings of monitoring reports in the context of local demographics and plan appropriate action if relevant

# Diversity Awareness

# Restore will work to promote cultural awareness and a respect for diversity. We will do this by:

* Seek to provide a welcoming environment in all Restore buildings
* Provide written information in a variety of languages where appropriate and possible
* Ensuring that all facilities or activities reflect diversity where possible
* Challenging discriminatory practice
* Ensure that staff have access to diversity awareness training, as appropriate