



## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Scope

In this document, the terms “we”, “us”, “our” and/or “WayMaker Child Therapy” refer to WayMaker Child Therapy. The terms “you” and/or “your” refer to all employees of WayMaker Child Therapy CIC, who are covered by this policy. It does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change and statutory updates at our discretion.

### Policy Statement - Our commitment to you:

- We will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services we provide, the structures that we facilitate and the practice through which we carry out our work. We will do this by developing diversity in our management committee, networks and membership, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.
- We realise that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believe that this prevents young people, and others, from realising their potential.
- We accept the responsibility, as a provider of a service to the community, to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs.

### Key Principles

- We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment and are fully committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. Our staff and anyone applying for a job with us will receive fair and equal treatment.
- We will never victimise anyone who makes a legitimate complaint if they, or somebody else, is being harassed or discriminated against.
- We will do all that we can to challenge any language or behaviour of any user of our services that is unacceptable and incompatible with this policy. In cases where intervention is possible, we will adopt a gentle approach, which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour.



## Equal Opportunities Procedure/Guide

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**Discrimination** – The following list gives you a general description of the types of acts that may both breach this policy and be unlawful. Sometimes actions can be intentional, and sometimes unintentional and we include examples of both types in this list:

- When somebody is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic than somebody else has been – or would have been – in identical circumstances, then this is **direct discrimination**. Rejecting a job applicant because of their beliefs would, for example, amount to direct discrimination.
- When a group of people with one of the protected characteristics (subject to a couple of exceptions) is put at a disadvantage by a provision, practice or criteria applied to all staff, this is **indirect discrimination**
- When a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment is created in relation to a protected characteristic, this is **harassment**.
- When a worker has complained about harassment or discrimination, or supported a colleague in their complaint, it is **victimisation** if they are then treated less favourably.



**Protected characteristics** – these are characteristics, which it is **unlawful** to use as a basis to discriminate against someone who possesses one or more of the characteristics, and are:

- Age
- Race (which includes colour and ethnic/national origin)
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or civil partner status.

**In addition, nor will we discriminate against someone due to their:**

- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status

### **Glossary of terms used (cont'd)**

NB - There are other actions, which are illegal under the equal opportunities legislation, and these are collectively labelled **other acts**. Examples include:

- Instructing another person – or applying pressure on them – to discriminate
- Knowingly assisting somebody else when they carry out a discriminatory act
- Discriminating against somebody believed to have a protected characteristic, whether or not they actually do, or because they associate with a third party who does.

**Sexual Harassment - This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:**

- Verbal sexual abuse
- Physical contact
- Repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive



If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **We will:**

- Take overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- Take responsibility for ensuring that when we recruit staff and volunteers to work in our projects that they are aware of our Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working for us
- Provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it
- Treat all instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour seriously
- Also treat complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature as serious.

### **You will:**

- Act at all times in a manner that is consistent with WayMaker Child Therapy C.I.C. values
- If any service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with Eileen Russell.

### **Our volunteers and employees will:**

- Have a duty, as part of their involvement with us, to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice

### **How we carry out our responsibilities and duties:**

- We are all essential for ensuring the success of this policy and each of us has our own duties and responsibilities.
- We all have a legal responsibility to comply, and any of us — management and staff — may be found personally liable for unlawful discrimination if we breach the terms of the policy.
- Overall responsibility for the effective implementation and operation of the policy lies with **WayMaker Child Therapy CIC's Board of Directors.**
- Everyone is expected to act in full accordance with this policy, and attain and maintain appropriate standards of behaviour in all aspects of their work with us.



- The ethos and standards covered by this policy can only be achieved and maintained if all **employees and volunteers** also co-operate fully, and it is important to understand that you also have a legal responsibility to comply.
- We accordingly expect you to take personal responsibility for adhering to the policy's aims and commitments and for drawing any breaches to our attention.

### **How we recruit, promote, and make other selections:**

- We carry out all recruitment, promotion and other types of selection procedures on the basis of merit using non-discriminatory and, as far as possible, objective criteria.
- Advertisements for vacancies must not include wording that may discourage some groups of people from applying, or stereotype in any way, and they must be placed where they can reach as wide and diverse a pool of potential candidates as possible.
- Nobody applying for employment or volunteering opportunities with us must be asked about their health or whether they have a disability before a job offer is made, except in very limited situations. It may, for example, be justifiable to ask whether the applicant needs any disability related measures put in place for the interview, or to check that they are capable of carrying out a key part of the job. It is acceptable to make some job offers dependent on a medical examination.
- It is unlawful to ask job applicants anything that might suggest intent to discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Asking an applicant about their religion for a job entailing weekend working would not, for example, be permissible.
- Including health or disability questions in equal opportunities monitoring exercises is acceptable, but the data gathered must not be used for selecting or other employment-related decisions.

### **Access and Provision of Services:**

WayMaker Child Therapy C.I.C. is committed to providing, in so far as is practicable, a therapeutic space which is equally available to any member of the public wishing to access its services. It is further committed to ensuring that provision of services is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure no one be denied treatment on inappropriate grounds which might contravene the Equal Opportunities Policy.

- WayMaker Child Therapy C.I.C aims to provide information about its services in an easily accessible format and in a variety of contexts to reach all members of the community. In addition, WayMaker Child Therapy is committed to expanding access to affordable therapy to those members of the community who might otherwise be excluded through financial disadvantage. To this end we seek charitable funding to support subsidised schemes providing therapy at a substantially reduced rate.



- WayMaker Child Therapy aims to make its services accessible to those with disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language, in so far as is practicable, and to be mindful of the impact cultural and other differences may have in our work. We aim to evaluate each client as an individual and make an unbiased assessment of their needs and the appropriateness of the services we have on offer, explore ways in which we can accommodate any special needs where practicable or refer the client on to a more appropriate service.
- The treatments and facilities provided by WayMaker Child Therapy are monitored through service user evaluation in order for feedback to be incorporated into future policy and procedural matters.

#### **How we enforce this policy and handle breaches:**

- We investigate any complaint or allegation raised regarding a potential breach of this policy, and if you believe you have been harassed or discriminated against you should contact Eileen Russell as soon as possible.
- If you want to take formal action, you will need to follow our complaints procedure.
- You will face disciplinary action if we find you have harassed or discriminated against anyone else in breach of this policy. Sometimes this type of behaviour may amount to gross misconduct, in which case you will be dismissed without notice and with no payment in lieu of notice.
- Occasionally, people make complaints knowing them not to be true. They might do this to avoid or deflect disciplinary action, for example.
- We view any complaint made in bad faith as an act of misconduct and this will normally lead to disciplinary action. In exceptional cases, bad faith complaints can lead to summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

#### **How we monitor whether the policy is working:**

- We may record and analyse information about equal opportunities within the workplace, and when you join us you give us consent to gather and process this data about you.
- We use the information to make sure this policy is operating properly and refine it, to review the composition of the workforce, and to promote workplace equality.
- We use evaluation and monitoring of our services including feedback and testimonials from service users and their parents/carers to refine our policy and processes with regards to equal opportunities to access the services.
- We will regularly review this policy to ensure that no member of the group is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff and volunteers, the member organisation, the board of directors and the provision of services.



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