

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy**

Ham & Petersham SOS is committed to tackling all forms of discrimination and inequality in both the workplace and the services the organisation provides. This policy sets out how it will promote equal opportunity and prevent all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

**Aims**

The aim of the policy is to:

* Work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination.
* Create a positive culture throughout Ham & Petersham SOS, where diversity, inclusion and respect are core values and at the centre of all our activities.
* Ensure staff, volunteers and trustees are engaged with the development and implementation of this policy.
* Encourage positive action to overcome disadvantage and discrimination.
* Ensure the highest possible standards are achieved in the delivery of our services
* Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is promoted through our work, both internally and externally.

**Ham & Petersham SOS is committed to:**

* Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace
* Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes giving managers and employees the relevant information and training about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.  
  
All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public

* Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by trustees, employees, service users, volunteers, and any others in the course of the organisation’s work activities.  
    
  Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation’s Grievance & Disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.  
    
  Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
* Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
* Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
* Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
* Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.  
    
  Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

**EQUALITY**

Equality is about fairness, it is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that their needs are met in different ways. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. Equality protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of group membership (gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender identity, age).

**DIVERSITY**

Diversity is about valuing all visible and non-visible differences and recognising and accepting that harnessing these differences creates an environment where everyone feels valued. A diverse approach aims to recognise value and manage differences to enable all employees to contribute and realise their full potential.

**INCLUSION**

Inclusion involves taking action to remove barriers to participation. It also involves eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff, volunteers and trustees must adhere to this policy. The Organiser and the Board of Trustees are accountable for ensuring the policy is implemented.

**Every line manager has a responsibility to**:

* Set a positive example by ensuring that their actions and behaviours promote EDI.
* Stop inappropriate behaviour as soon as they become aware of it.
* Support and implement action that Ham & Petersham SOS takes to improve diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities.
* Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of and carry out their responsibilities under the law and this policy.

**Every employee has a responsibility to:**

* Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others.
* Challenge and report any behaviour that could be interpreted as discriminatory.
* Understand what is expected of them in terms of their performance, their behaviour and their conduct towards others.
* Set a positive example at all times.
* Listen to and respect others and discourage discriminatory speculations.

**Every volunteer has a duty to:**

* Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others
* Not discriminate unfairly against service users when giving help and support, or other members of the organisation.
* Challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as unfair discrimination.
* Listen to and respect others and discourage discriminatory speculations and behaviour.