

## Equalities Policy

### Statement of intent

CAPS is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among people that we work with as well as our staff and volunteers. Our aim is that all those connected with CAPS should be truly representative of all sections of society and each person feels respected and valued.

No-one who works for us or who uses our services should be treated unfairly and we will always do our best not to discriminate against anyone. CAPS is committed to the principles of equal opportunities in employment and in the delivery of independent advocacy.

By the provision of independent advocacy, CAPS is also committed to advance and promote human rights. We will challenge unlawful discrimination, by any other agency, of the people we work with.

### Purpose

- To ensure **equality, fairness** and **respect** for staff and volunteers, whether part time, full time, paid or unpaid
- To **not unlawfully discriminate** because of the protected characteristics named in the Equality Act 2010:
  - Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
  - To **oppose** and **avoid** all forms of **unlawful discrimination**. This includes in:
    - pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

### What CAPS will do

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as good practice
- Create a working environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
- Promote dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of staff and volunteers are recognised and valued.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility under the Equalities Policy to assist CAPS to provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. They should tell their line manager or supervisor if they suspect a worker, volunteer, participant or Management Committee member of unlawfully

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discriminating against someone else. All staff and volunteers should understand that they, as well as CAPS, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in their work with us, against colleagues and people we work with.

- Take seriously, complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, partner organisations, the public and any others in relation to our work.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under our grievance and/or disciplinary procedures and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations.

- Encourage and support staff and volunteers to recognise and challenge unlawful discrimination arising against people who use our mental health advocacy services
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff and volunteers, so they can be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to benefit CAPS. (Dependent on sufficient funding being available)
- Make sure that any work done by, or for CAPS, complies with this policy including improvements and new initiatives
- Make sure that our independent advocacy service is as accessible to as many groups of people as possible and actively promote advocacy to people who are eligible to access our services and are not doing so.
- 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 how the equality policy is working in practice, review it regularly, and take action to address any issues.

**See also:**

Recruitment Policy  
Complaints Procedure  
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures  
Working to CAPS values  
Terms and Conditions of Employment

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*This Equalities Policy adopted by CAPS Management Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018.*