

LEICESTERSHIRE AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE POLICY
JANUARY 2007

Leicestershire AIDS Support Services (LASS) is committed to providing an environment where all staff, service users and carers enjoy equality of opportunity. LASS works to eliminate all forms of discrimination and recognise that this requires, not only a commitment to remove discrimination, but also action through positive policies to redress inequalities.

Providing equality of opportunity means understanding and appreciating the diversity of our staff, service users & carers and ensuring a supportive environment free from harassment. Because of this LASS actively encourages its staff to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all.

Equal opportunity does not mean treating everybody exactly the same. It means recognising that all people are individual and unique and therefore we will aim to adapt the way we work in order to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, equally and have access to the same opportunities as is reasonably practicable.

The organisation operates within the guidelines of the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Conduct complies fully with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, and any other relevant legislation that may be in force.

We aim to ensure that everyone using our services, our volunteers and employees are not discriminated against due to (but not exclusive to) age; gender; religion; cultural or ethnic origin; race; disability; HIV status; sexuality orientation or marital status.

LASS is committed to a continuing programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all employees, volunteers and service users.

Employment and Employees:

As an employer committed to equal opportunities a section of our employment handbook is our policy on equality and diversity for staff in employment at LASS.

Service Provision and Service Users:

We ensure that no person we provide services to will receive less favourable treatment on irrelevant, inappropriate or illegal grounds, particularly including (but not exclusive to) age; gender; religion; cultural or ethnic origin; race; disability; HIV status; sexual orientation or marital status.

There is a written criteria regarding eligibility for accessing the services that LASS provides. Needs assessments are reviewed to ensure that a service is offered purely on the basis of a Service User's relevant needs and circumstances.

All those who use our services will be entitled to equality of opportunity.

Anyone who feels they have been denied equality of opportunity whilst in receipt of services offered by LASS will be encouraged to feedback to us and if this is not acted upon to use the complaints procedure so that concerns can be investigated and responded to.

Staff will make Service Users and visitors to LASS aware of their rights and obligations with regard to equal opportunities.

Where appropriate, service user individual support plans will outline boundaries of unacceptable behaviour and LASS reserves the right to withdraw services to any Service User if that person behaves in a discriminatory, disruptive, threatening, abusive or illegal manner to any Employee, Volunteer, or other Service User.

Volunteering and Volunteers:

LASS promotes and encourages positive attitudes to difference; an awareness of the multi-cultural and diverse nature of our society; and has zero tolerance for discrimination.

To support this, we apply objective criteria to assess an individuals suitability for volunteering involvement and have a written Volunteering Policy covering recruitment and selection policy and procedure.

Selection criteria and procedures are reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, involved and treated entirely on a basis of their relevant merits, abilities and appropriateness.

The organisation recognises that on occasion it may be appropriate to facilitate, as far as is reasonably practicable, special or additional equipment, training or action in order to enable volunteers to be involved appropriately.

LASS includes awareness of our equality and anti-discrimination policy as part of induction training for all volunteers.

Anti-discriminatory Practice:

LASS are committed to ensuring that anti-discriminatory practice is promoted throughout the organisation. The organisation aims to develop employees and volunteers to become fully sensitive to the culture, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and social background of others.

LASS works actively with staff, volunteers and service users in order to promote and encourage a positive attitude, recognition, understanding and acceptance of diversity, uniqueness and difference. Individuals will be encouraged to extend their awareness of social and cultural settings beyond their immediate experience.

LASS aims to empower staff and volunteers to recognise and to challenge any discriminatory or oppressive language and behaviour, and to be pro-active in presenting positive images of the diversity of people that make up our society.

The organisation takes all reasonable steps to ensure that our building values and includes people with different cultures, religions, abilities and social practices. We ensure that our building is welcoming, non-threatening and stimulating places to be, and where individuals are valued because of who they are and of any differences, rather than in spite of them.

Responsibility for Equal Opportunities:

It is the responsibility of all trustees, employees, volunteers and service users to uphold the integrity of this policy. Employees are required to do this as a condition of employment.

Implementation:

The organisation will ensure that all trustees, employees and volunteers understand and accept this Policy during their induction to Leicestershire AIDS Support Services.

Employees and volunteers will receive appropriate information, training and induction in equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, and where appropriate this will also be offered to service users.

Publication of this Policy:

An Equal Opportunities Policy Statement that outlines the key features of this Policy is made available to all applicants for paid employment, volunteers and also to service users, and other interested parties (such as funding bodies) upon request. The Equal Opportunities Policy Statement and this full Policy document are also available upon request, as well as on the organisation's website.

Review of this Policy:

This policy will be amended as necessary following changes in legislation, formal organisational reviews and in response to situations or issues which may arise. It will be scrutinised every 3 years as part of a formal review by the Board of Trustees, including feedback from staff, service users and volunteers.

Relevant Policies and Legislation include:

- Race Relations Act 1976 - and any amendments.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - and any amendments.
- Human Rights Act 1998 - and any amendments.
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 - and any amendments.
- Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice.
- Equal Pay Act 1970 - and any amendments.
- Employment Rights Act 1996 - and any amendments.
- Public Interest Disclosure Act - and any amendments.
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse/Safeguarding Adults - Multi agency Policy and Procedures.
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.
- The Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 - and any amendments.
- Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999 - and any amendments.
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 - and any amendments.
- Equal Treatment Amendment Directive 2002/03/EC (due in October 05) to prohibit Harassment and Sexual Harassment.
- LASS Policies, including: Dignity at Work; Harassment; Fair Access to Services; Public Interest Disclosure; Volunteering.
- LASS Recruitment and Selection Procedure.
- LASS Service Eligibility Criteria.
- LASS Complaints Procedure.

Updated November 2008 – to replace Management Committee with Board of Trustees

LASS Document Control		
Approved by:		
Signature:		
Board Responsibility:		
Review Date:	November 2011	