



South Lanarkshire
**Carers
Network**

Equality and Diversity **POLICY**

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Introduction

This policy is the guiding principle that SLCN (The Network) will adhere to in relation to equality and diversity. South Lanarkshire Carers Network Equality and Diversity Policy is not about political correctness or the preferential treatment for some sections of the community over others. The policy is entirely concerned with fairness and equity and the provision of fully accessible, quality services.

The policy also aims to tackle discrimination and disadvantage in all its forms, create a stable, inclusive and cohesive community by ensuring that we meet our legal obligations. We not only wish to meet these obligations, but to do more by promoting best practice in employment and the delivery of services.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all members of the organisation understand and support and avoid the opposition of 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with The Networks code of conduct.

Aims of Policy

- To ensure our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best
- To provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all
- To encourage equality and diversity in the workplace

Legislation

The relevant legislation concerning the policy is the Equality Act 2010, The Scotland Act 1998

Related Procedures

Code of Conduct

Policy

South Lanarkshire Carer Network believes that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. This applies not only to our workforce but also to our carers in the way we deliver our services to the local community.

Our aim is to ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of all services users. We want to make sure that we are seen to be fair and equitable in the provision of services, by service users, partners and the wider community.

To meet these aims South Lanarkshire Carers Network is committed to:

- The Scotland Act 1998 definition of equal opportunities.
- Meeting all current duties by promoting equality of opportunity and removing barriers that affect access to opportunity for disadvantaged groups and individuals in our community.
- Ensuring the equal opportunities principle of fairness for all underpins every aspect of our work in combating all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace, in service delivery, or within the community.
- Fair employment and equal pay policies that ensure our workforce represents our community.
- Providing quality services which users (and potential users) can access easily and equitably without prejudice, discrimination or harassment.
- Ensuring that services, facilities, and employment opportunities are accessible and receptive to the values and the diversity needs within the community.
- Identifying groups within the community whose needs/requirements are not met services.
- Developing and adopting a coherent and strategic approach to the implementation of this policy and improving equality practices at both corporate and departmental level.
- Influencing partners and promoting and encouraging tolerance, fairness and equality

Vision

The following vision statement outlines the type of equality and diversity organisation that we aim to be. We want to be viewed as a forward thinking organisation, and through our Equality and Diversity Policy we want to:

- Achieve equality and diversity in all of our activities and responsibilities
- Maintain a discrimination free work environment
- Value and develop our employees' skills and abilities regardless of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief
- Deliver relevant, culturally sensitive and fully accessible services to all sections of our community
- Consult, engage and be aware of the views of the whole of the community and involve them in the decision-making process
- To make equalities a fundamental condition of grant-aid and service level agreements for all funded organisations, and
- Provide strong community leadership in the pursuit of equality and diversity objectives in the area as a whole and use multi-agency and partnership working to secure those objectives

Policy objectives

In meeting this vision our objectives are to:

- Value and respect the diversity of those who live, work and do business in our area.
- Create a positive, safe, healthy and accessible working and learning environment.

- Create a culture, in which discrimination has no part, and where everyone can achieve their full potential.
- Listen to, engage and collaborate with the community, partners and staff in order to continually improve our equality and diversity practice.
- Work with relevant partners and agencies to influence their equality and diversity principles.
- Ensure sound equality and diversity principles are embedded in all our communications.
- Empower people by providing accessible information.
- Mainstream equality and diversity into service delivery and all decisions by developing systems and processes, which are accessible and transparent.
- Ensure all projects and programmes delivered by ourselves adhere to equality and diversity principles.
- Take necessary action when non-compliance with this policy is identified.

Our policy commitments

- Considering the potential impact of and assessing the effect on customers and communities of our policies, strategies and functions
- Taking action to improve them if they result in discrimination or disadvantage to any groups or communities
- Building the competence of managers and employees to achieve equality results
- Steering and supporting employees efforts with equalities expertise
- Creating clear accountability
- Consulting with designated community, employees and stakeholder groups
- Recognising the right of individuals to hold and practice their political and religious beliefs. (All employees are expected to comply with the employee Code of Conduct)

When we develop plans and policies, we will:

- Ensure that our approach to delivering and monitoring equality and diversity is coordinated and effective.
- Design our services to meet the diverse needs of all our communities and ensure that plans and policies do not negatively discriminate against particular groups, either directly or indirectly.

For improving equality practice we will:

- Review our Equality and Diversity Policy on a regular basis to assess how effectively we are meeting our objectives.
- Ensure that all South Lanarkshire Carers Network communications promote images that reflect the full diversity of cultural need and aspirations of South Lanarkshire communities.

Consultation and engagement

South Lanarkshire Carers Network recognises the importance of consulting, involving and being aware of the views of employees and the whole community in delivering its Equality and Diversity Policy.

When consulting and involving communities we will:

- Consult with people from all communities in South Lanarkshire to help shape the services we deliver and our policies and practices.

- Support the development of partnerships and forums which enable effective consultation and involvement to take place.
- Share information with equality forums and other organisations as appropriate to help achieve the equality aims and objectives.
- Consult and listen to people about the way we develop and deliver services
- Involve the community in the decision making process
- Plan and improve our services based on needs

Service delivery

Our customers' include Carers, local businesses and visitors to the area and all will be afforded equal access to the services provided by South Lanarkshire Carers network. We are committed to providing high-quality services that everyone can use.

When we deliver services we will:

- Comply with legal requirements and other relevant codes of practice and good practice guidelines.
- Integrate equality considerations into all mainstream activities, at policy and procedural level, to avoid marginalising issues.
- Assess the extent to which carer services are accessible, including the assessment of premises, facilities and methods of providing information.
- Take appropriate remedial action, wherever practical, to make services accessible.
- Ensure services are relevant to the carers of South Lanarkshire and take into account different needs which will inform and improve equality and diversity.
- Provide information about services that is clear, accurate and accessible to all.
- Treat all customers positively, taking into account their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, nationality, religion, belief or any other individual characteristics.
- Investigate; respond seriously, confidentially and promptly to complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Ensure that all employees receive appropriate equality and diversity training; such training will be incorporated into a broad range of training methods such as induction, as well as both general and specific training. Arrange equality a diversity training.

Responsibilities for implementation

Responsibility for the prevention and elimination of unfair treatment and the implementation of this policy lies with the board, managers and employees.

We all have a duty to:

- Comply with and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy
- Co-operate with other procedures and practices that complement the Equality and Diversity Policy
- Be aware of our behaviour and its impact upon others
- Report any suspected discriminatory actions
- Report any suspicions of harassment taking place
- Not victimise people because they have made a complaint or have been involved in a complaint of harassment or discrimination
- Seek guidance on matters of equality and best practice when unsure of the appropriate course of action.

- Work within the Code of Conduct and Code of Practice for South Lanarkshire Carers Network for both Elected Members and employees as applicable

All complaints received are dealt with confidentially and sensitively to protect both the complainer and the person the complaint is about.

For confidential advice, and a copy of any of our policies or procedures, phone the South Lanarkshire Carers Network on 01698 285163.

Adopted date

31st January 2018

Version Control

Author	Date	Agreed by	Date
Denise Gillespie	29 th December 2017		