the brain injury association

HEADWAY NORTH CUMBRIA
EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. Headway North Cumbria is committed to supporting and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This includes tackling all forms of discrimination and inequality in the services the organisation provides. This commitment informs all of our activities and their impact on our members, volunteers and others that come in to contact with Headway North Cumbria.

2. Headway North Cumbria takes an approach to EDI with the intent of:

- working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination.
- ensuring our committee and volunteers are engaged with the implementation of this policy.
- encouraging a positive action to overcome disadvantage and discrimination.
- ensuring the highest possible standards are achieved in the delivery of our services to our members.
- ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion is promoted through our work, both internally and externally.

AIM OF THE POLICY

3. The aim of this policy is to create a positive culture throughout Headway North Cumbria, where equity, diversity, inclusion and respect are at the centre of all our activities.

DEFINITIONS

4. The following definitions apply to this policy

Protected Characteristics: Protected characteristics refer to the nine characteristics that are protected in the Equality Act (2010). The protected characteristics[1] are:

[1] https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights

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- **Age:** Being a part of a specific age group (young or old, or a range of ages).
- **Gender reassignment:** Proposing to undergo, undergoing, or having undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign your sex by changing your physiological or other aspects of sex.
- **Marriage and civil partnership:** Being married or in a civil partnership.
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** Being pregnant, or being on maternity leave.
- **Disability:** Having a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.
- **Race:** Including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or belief:** Any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of belief.
- **Sex:** Being a man or a woman.
- **Sexual orientation:** Whether your sexual attraction is towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both.

Equality: Equality is about fairness. It is about ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. Equality protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of the protected characteristics.

Equity: The term "equity" refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality. Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognising that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

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 everyone to contribute and realise their full potential.

Inclusion: Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.

Positive Action: Positive action means the steps that can be taken to encourage people from specific groups with different needs or with a past

track record of disadvantage or low participation to engage with branch. Positive action can be used when it is reasonably thought that:

- people who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.
- people who share a protected characteristic have needs that are different from the needs of people who do not share it.
- participation in an activity by people who share a protected characteristic is disproportionately low.

PRINCIPLES

5. Headway North Cumbria is committed to:

- Creating an inclusive environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our committee and volunteers are recognised and valued.
- Creating an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all.
- A zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment on the grounds of age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in all aspects of our work.
- Regularly reviewing service provision to ensure it is accessible, fair and appropriate to all groups within society.
- Providing information to the committee and volunteers to ensure that they are fully aware of EDI issues and their responsibilities relating to these areas.
- Monitoring our EDI activities so that we can work towards ensuring we reflect the communities we serve.
- Promoting the benefits of embracing EDI internally and externally.
- Embedding EDI into our policies, procedures and everyday practice.
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing this policy to ensure that inclusive practice is embedded.
- Challenging discriminatory behaviour demonstrated by volunteers, or members and where necessary taking further action .

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

7. Headway North Cumbria is committed to going beyond the legal minimum regarding equity and work towards best and exemplary practice. Current equality legislation and associated codes of practice are taken into account regarding our activities.

8. Equality legislation serves to protect individuals against all forms of discrimination because of a particular protected characteristic. In summary it is unlawful to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat them less favourably than others on the grounds of the protected characteristics. This also includes discrimination based on perception of the person e.g. a belief that someone is gay or a belief that someone is disabled even if this is not actually true.
- Discriminate against someone for reasons relating to their association with a person on the grounds of the protected characteristics.
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Subject someone to harassment for reasons of a protected characteristic. This includes behaviour that an individual finds offensive on these grounds even if the behaviour is not directed at the individual. It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because they either submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex.
- Victimise someone because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination in line with the Equality Act.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

9. Headway North Cumbria is committed to equal opportunities in volunteering and service delivery. We will take every possible step to ensure that anyone volunteering with us, or anyone using our services will not receive less favourable treatment as because of a protected characteristic. We will also not discriminate on the grounds of political activities, socio-economic status, responsibility for dependents, or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

10. Headway North Cumbria aims to ensure it values and represents the diversity of communities both locally and nationally. Everyone should feel respected and valued and able to achieve their full potential.

11. Headway North Cumbria is aware of the intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination people can face as a result of having multiple marginalised identities and that often this intersection is linked with poverty. We endeavour to acknowledge and understand the diverse experiences of our volunteers and members. We aim to provide services that are free of judgement and that are tailored to the needs of each individual.

12. Under the Equality Act 2010, organisations have a responsibility to make sure that disabled people can access services as easily as non-disabled people. This is known as the 'duty to make reasonable adjustments'. Disabled people can experience discrimination if an organisation doesn't make a reasonable adjustment. Headway North Cumbria is committed to supporting all disabled volunteers and members, and wherever possible will ensure reasonable adjustments are put into place for those that need them.

RESPONSIBILITIES

13. The committee and volunteers of Headway North Cumbria must ensure that they adhere to this policy, in particular they should:

- Understand what is expected of them in terms of their performance, their behaviour and their conduct towards others.
- Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others.
- Not discriminate unfairly against other volunteers, members or visitors.
- Challenge and report any behaviour that could be interpreted as discriminatory.
- Set a positive example by ensuring that their actions and behaviours promote EDI.
- Stop inappropriate behaviour as soon as they become aware of it.

RAISING EDI CONCERNS

14. Committee members and volunteers should refer to the Bullying and Harassment policy regarding how to deal specifically with complaints of bullying, harassment and victimisation.

15. Members wishing to raise EDI concerns should do so using our Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

16. All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated and, if proven, will result in appropriate action for the perpetrator. Any committee member or volunteer found to be in breach of this policy could have their engagement with Headway North Cumbria terminated. Any member found to be in breach of this policy could be asked to stop attending Headway North Cumbria activities or accessing Headway North Cumbria services.

RELATED HEADWAY NORTH CUMBRIA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Bullying and Harassment Policy
Code of Conduct for Members
Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure
Confidentiality Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Privacy & Dignity Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Volunteer Code of Conduct
Volunteer Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

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