



## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

This document sets out the policy of This New Ground for promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion among its staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and generally.

This New Ground is a Community Interest Company registered at Companies House in England & Wales with company number 11079671<sup>1</sup>. We are a not-for-profit organisation which aims to elevate the artistic voices and talents of people with learning disabilities in Hammersmith and Fulham and the city of Portsmouth and to remove barriers and increase access for people with learning disabilities to lead, make and participate in the arts.

### **The purpose of this policy**

This New Ground is committed to encouraging Equity, Diversity and Inclusion among our workforce and volunteers and to eliminating unlawful discrimination, whether direct, indirect, conscious or inadvertent by or against them and in the delivery of services to our beneficiaries.

The purpose of this policy is to seek to uphold these aspirations, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and to:

- Provide Equity, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, and those volunteering for us;
- Not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of the protected characteristics of 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;
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in terms of 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;
- Ensure that rules, procedures, policies or physical barriers are not introduced, implemented or installed that impact disproportionately on those with a protected characteristic so as to result in indirect discrimination;
- Ensure that those receiving services from us are similarly not unlawfully discriminated against.

### **This New Ground's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

This New Ground commits to:

- Encourage Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and accord with our ethos as an organisation promoting the interests of those with learning disabilities; and

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<sup>1</sup> With its registered office at Larch House, Parklands Business Park, Denmead PO7 6XP, England.

- 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 and volunteers are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes informing all staff and volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under this policy, including conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment and volunteering, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination against any person.

### **Our collective responsibilities**

All staff and volunteers should understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts, in the course of their work, of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination against fellow employees, volunteers, service users, suppliers and the public. Accordingly, they must:

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, service users, suppliers, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities; and
- Have regard to This New Ground's Anti-bullying, Safeguarding and Whistleblowing policies, which deal with bullying, harassment and abuse, with the care and welfare of children and adults at risk and with the protection of persons who in good faith draw attention to matters of concern.

This New Ground further commits to:

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to those working with us, to help and encourage them to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation;
- Ensure that decisions concerning them are based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equity Act 2010);
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and this policy to take account of changes in the law;
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability to encourage Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and to meet the aims and commitments set out in this policy;

Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equity policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues arising.

### **Inclusion Statement**

This New Ground are dedicated to placing inclusion at the heart of all their work; they have played a committed role in advancing participation in the arts by disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded people and often charting new territories with projects.

This New Ground believe that everyone should have the freedom to explore the world through the arts and be given the opportunity to express themselves, even explore their own sense of self, in a

way that compliments the individual, the community they belong to, and society as a whole. This New Ground specifically develop projects which aim to promote inclusion & remove all barriers whether physical, attitudinal or in the area of communication.

### **Consequences of acts that breach this policy**

Where acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination are perpetrated by a member of staff, they will be treated as misconduct under the organisation's 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 and may additionally constitute a criminal offence. Appropriate steps will also be taken against volunteers or others who perpetrate such acts, including terminating that person's relationship with This New Ground and notifying the relevant authorities or those legally responsible for the perpetrator if, for example, they are a child.

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

*This policy has been endorsed by the  
senior management of This New Ground  
and was reviewed and updated in February 2024*