

## Shropshire Disability Network Equality and Diversity Policy

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our charity and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our volunteers and members to be truly representative of all sections of society and the public, and for each volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best.

The charity, in providing services is also committed against unlawful discrimination of service users or the general public.

This policy's purpose is to:

- ensure equality, fairness and respect for all our volunteers.
- not unlawfully discriminate against 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 as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination.

SDN commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity within the charity
- create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all,

and where individual differences and the contributions of all volunteers are recognised and valued.

- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow volunteers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the charity's work activities.
- This commitment includes ensuring that all volunteers are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include volunteers and members conducting themselves to help the charity provide equal opportunities and to prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All members of SDN must understand that they, as well as the charity, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their volunteering, against fellow volunteers and members, suppliers and the public.
- Such acts will be dealt with 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 removal of the individual from the charity.
- Further, sexual harassment may amount to a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. 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.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all volunteers, who will be helped and encouraged to

develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the charity

- Decisions concerning volunteers will be based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Review practices and procedures regularly to ensure fairness, and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- Monitor the make-up of the charity regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and acting to address any issues

The equality policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees.

All SDN policies are reviewed annually.

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>June 2020</b>
<b>Review Author</b>	<b>Ann Shaw, Honorary Secretary, SDN</b>