

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

### PURPOSE:

To set out the approach of Changing Pathways (CP) in relation to ensuring equality of opportunity for employees, volunteers, service users and stakeholders in terms of employment and access to services and to provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice.

### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Changing Pathways (CP) employees (including temporary/agency workers), board members, volunteers, contractors and other stakeholders.

### RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- Comments, Commendations and Complaints Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct

### VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Rationale
1	January 2017	Philippa Ladd – CEO	First publication
2	September 2018	Philippa Ladd – CEO	Annual Review
3	October 2020	Julie Johnson – Business Manager	Annual Review – Version Control and Contents page added, minor changes made, format changes made, creation of separate Appendix 1
4	November 2021	Julie Johnson – Business Manager	Annual Review – minor changes made

4.1	November 2021	Julie Johnson - Business Manager	Change made to para.1.12, addition of inclusion statement and 1.13, addition of marriage and civil partnership.
5	March 2024	Tania Woodgate CEO	Change para 1.6 - minor change

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## PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

### 1.0 Aims and Principles

1.1 Changing Pathways (CP) is committed to striving for equality in the provision of its services and the employment of employees, volunteers and Board of Trustees who provide these services and contribute to the organisation.

1.2 Changing Pathways will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements signalled under EU Directives.

This Equal Opportunities Policy has been guided by:

- The Equality Act (2010)
- ACAS Guidance on Equality and Discrimination

In addition, Codes of Practice issued by the ‘The Equality and Human Rights Commission’ although not legally binding, will be fully supported.

1.3 The Equality Act 2010 brings together previous legislation to protect people who possess one (or more) of the protected characteristics (types) of discrimination which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

1.4 Under the Equality 2010 there are six types of discrimination: direct discrimination, discrimination by association, perception discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation (see Appendix 1 for further details about these different types of discrimination).

1.5 In addition to the protected characteristics outlined above, CP will ensure that no employee will be discriminated if any of the following is applicable:

- Fixed-Term Employee.
- Ex-Offenders – as relevant under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974).
- Part-Time Employee.
- Trade Union Membership – if they either belong or do not belong to a trade union.

1.6 CP recognises that certain groups in society continue to be discriminated against on a variety of grounds. Changing Pathways is a feminist organisation committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination. In addition to working within required legislation and best practice guidelines, Changing Pathways seeks to recognise, respect and promote diversity and take a social rather than medical approach to disability.

1.7 In employment, CP will as far as is lawful, take positive action with employees or job applicants who share a particular protected characteristic if we identify a disadvantage connected to that characteristic, or if their participation in an activity is disproportionately low. The organisation will undertake positive action by targeting our job advertisements to under-represented groups and/or utilising statements in advertisements that state the organisation welcomes applicants from under-represented groups.

1.8 In policy development it is our aim to develop and implement anti-discriminatory strategies and diversity initiatives and to promote these policies across our spheres of influence.

1.9 CP will monitor and review the composition of its employees, Board of Trustees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and other parties working with the organisation with the aim of promoting a broad-based representation. This will include how the organisation instructs counsel and other experts.

1.10 The policy will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation.

1.11 Further information on the relevant legislation, is available on the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

1.12 CP will display the Inclusion statement detailed below in its premises where it can be seen by service users and staff members.

*Changing Pathways are committed to recognising and appreciating the commonalities and differences of all individuals, and are proud to celebrate the unique things that make our diverse community. We recognise that we are more effective and much stronger when we work together. Changing Pathways are dedicated to equitable treatment and elimination of discrimination of all forms across all organisational levels. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that is fluid and adaptable so as to continue to deliver safe and accessible services for those experiencing domestic abuse, and our employees.*

1.13 Changing Pathways is actively opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, sex, maternity and pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership.

1.14 We will work to combat all direct and indirect discrimination in our employment practices and in the way we deliver our services.

## PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

### 2.0 General Guidance Points

2.1 CP will advertise its services as widely as possible and in particular in areas where it will be accessible to as wide a group of potential service users as possible e.g. health centres, doctor surgeries, women’s and community organisations, nursery provisions, schools, solicitors offices, advice bureaus etc.

2.2 CP will monitor service users to ensure that all communities are reached. In particular, we will monitor users in terms of race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, gender identity and ability. These statistics will be collected in such a way as to maintain client confidentiality. Statistics will be kept and reviewed at regular intervals to ensure all communities in our areas of work are represented amongst service users.

2.3 Where there is an under representation identified, this will be included in the inclusivity plan which outlines how the organisation will address barriers to service access for groups of people at risk of discrimination.

2.4 CP will seek the views of service users to ensure it meets their needs regularly throughout the year as part of their Consultation Strategy.

2.5 CP will keep an up to date list of all agencies offering support and advice to service users in the area. We will also keep a list of other solicitors available in the area who can assist those affected by domestic violence. Where we refer service users to other agencies we will make sure that the referral is appropriate. CP will use the Legal Services Directory where at all possible.

2.6 CP will ensure that the views of our users are represented at relevant forums, meetings, conferences and decision-making assemblies. Where we recognise a pattern of discrimination or need we will gather information and use it to raise awareness of the need for change.

2.7 CP will take action against any employee, volunteer, trustee, service user or visitor who commits any form of discrimination.

### 3.0 Recruitment, Selection and Employment

3.1 For operational vacancies a decision will be made by representatives of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and for strategic vacancies a decision will be made by the Board of Trustees as to whether to advertise the post internally or externally and their decision will be made on a variety of factors including:

whether there is sufficiently qualified internal candidates for a wide selection pool; the length of the contract (i.e. short term contracts could potentially be an internal advertisement, however, all contracts over a year duration should be advertised externally); timescale for recruitment or specific requirements of funders.

3.2 New employees will be recruited and selected using a job description and person specification. The job description will set out the duties, tasks, responsibilities and line of accountability of the post holder. The person specification will set out the skills and experience a candidate needs to carry out the job.

3.3 Job descriptions and person specifications will be drawn up by the Hiring Lead (the Hiring Lead will depend upon the job role on offer) in consultation with other members of SLT as appropriate.

3.4 Person specifications will detail the essential skills, knowledge and experience required for the post. There will be desirable criteria to assist the shortlisting process where there are too many candidates who meet the essential criteria to interview.

3.5 An application pack including an application form and equal opportunities monitoring form will be available to download from the organisation's website.

3.6 The interview selection panel will include people with relevant knowledge and expertise for the vacant post. For senior management posts, the interview panel will include a Board Member. Outside specialists will be included in the panel where the relevant expertise is not available within the organisation.

3.7 All panel members will have undertaken basic recruitment and selection training prior to the selection process.

3.8 An equal opportunities monitoring form will be sent out to each applicant and kept separate from application forms during the shortlisting process.

After the interviews, the forms will be used to monitor the profile of applicants to inform future job advertisements to attract as wide as group of applicants as possible.

3.9 The following statement will be used in all job advertisements:

“Changing Pathways is an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.

The post will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and is open to women only (\*Exempt under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 9, Part 1).”

3.10 Due to the nature of our service, there is a genuine occupational requirement of our job roles to be held by women.

#### 4.0 Conditions of Service

4.1 CP is committed to recognising the importance of cultural diversity and the different needs and responsibilities of individuals. These will be taken account of as widely as possible in the employment contract and in the organisation’s conditions of service.

4.2 All contracts of employment will contain a clause detailing an expectation for staff to implement and abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy. This will be related to disciplinary and grievance procedures.

4.3 Anyone who feels they have been discriminated against should discuss their concern with their line manager. If this does not resolve the concern, the employee may raise a formal grievance as per the grievance policy and procedure.

4.4 All employees and board members will be asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring on an annual basis to enable the organisation to monitor the diversity of its employees and volunteers.



4.5 The data will be presented as a dataset for the purposes of reporting to the Board of Trustees and for commissioner and funders as requested. All data will be presented anonymously.

#### 5.0 Developing, Implementing, Monitoring and Reviewing

5.1 The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that this policy is both implemented and monitored. They will ensure that all workers receive relevant training.

5.2 The Senior Leadership Team will report regularly to the Board on the implementation of this policy. The Board will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is developed according to the changing needs of the organisation and in accordance with legal requirements.

#### 6.0 Equality and Diversity Training

6.1 All employees and volunteers will undergo equality and diversity awareness and training within their induction process and will undergo refresher training on an annual basis to help them support individuals.

#### 7.0 Women Only Services

7.1 The organisation subscribes to the view that domestic abuse is a gender inequality experienced mainly by females and is perpetrated mainly by males. Domestic abuse can also occur in a range of relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships and in extended families. Abuse can be perpetrated by females against males. The organisation understands that women constitute 89% of all those who had experienced four or more incidents of domestic abuse (Walby and Allen, 2004). Reporting on domestic abuse from organisations such as the Home Office tend to focus on single incidents rather than the complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

7.2 The organisation provides mixed and women-only services to address the needs of domestic abuse victims and vulnerable individuals. For example, our refuge space for domestic abuse victims and their children are women only.

7.3 The Equality Act (2010) makes clear that women-only (and girl-only) are legal and appropriate in certain contexts and it is still legal and appropriate for public bodies to fund women-only services. Where a voluntary and community organisation normally provides services for one equality group only, it is lawful to continue to do so.

7.4 Male victims of domestic abuse including those victims who experience abuse from a same sex partner are able to access support through the organisation's outreach service and the organisation's male counselling service.

Appendix 1 – Types of Discrimination

This is covered in a separate document.

Appendix 2 – Employee and Trustee Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

This is covered in a separate document.

**REVIEW SCHEDULE**

**This policy is subject to annual review or when significant changes occur**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Board Approval</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
January 2017	Philippa Ladd	March 2017	January 2018
September 2018	Philippa Ladd	September 2018	September 2019

October 2020	Julie Johnson	March 2021	November 2021
November 2021	Julie Johnson	November 2021	November 2022