

## Healthwatch Redbridge Diversity Policy

### Statement of intent

Healthwatch Redbridge recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

Healthwatch Redbridge will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

Healthwatch Redbridge aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences. Healthwatch Redbridge sees these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve.

All volunteers, employees, committee members and member organisations must declare their support for the objectives of this Equality and diversity policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and/or ineligibility for membership.

### What is discrimination?

Healthwatch Redbridge believes that discrimination can take one or more of the forms set out below.

Direct discrimination is treating one person less favourably than another in the same or similar circumstances or segregating them from others solely because they are, for example, a lesbian, a gay man or because they have a disability or illness. Refusing to employ someone who has the required skills because they are deaf or because they are pregnant would constitute such discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where there is a requirement or condition which applies equally to everyone but which, in practice, has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified.

For example an unnecessary physical or age requirement can discriminate against women or disabled people. The setting of language tests, where language skills or fluency are not really needed for a job, is another example.



Abuse and/or harassment - Discrimination also covers actions which amount to abuse and/or harassment of people or groups of people because for example they are a member of a national, racial or ethnic minority group, a woman, a lesbian, a gay man or have a disability or illness.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably or is discriminated against because she/he has pursued or intends to pursue their rights in respect of alleged discrimination.

***Institutional racism (Macpherson Report, 1999)***

‘The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in the processes or attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination, to unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.’

***Racist incident (Macpherson Report, 1999)***

‘Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. If the victim doesn’t want to complain, another person may do so.’

Discrimination in any of the forms stated above is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

**Staff development**

Decisions about learning and development opportunities will be made in accordance with the Healthwatch Redbridge’ Staff Development policy and all staff will have access to opportunities to enable them to develop in line with Healthwatch Redbridge’ aims and objectives.

**Service provision**

All Healthwatch Redbridge services are covered by this policy. Healthwatch Redbridge will promote equality and diversity in its work with other agencies or individuals. Healthwatch Redbridge services will be reviewed regularly and changed where needed.

All trainers, facilitators and consultants contracted to work for Healthwatch Redbridge will be required to support our Equality and diversity policy.



## **Recruitment and selection**

Healthwatch Redbridge believes that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment because of the reasons given in the Statement of intent.

Staff appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination is occurring at the point of selection. A separate recruitment policy gives full details of this process.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Office accommodation**

Healthwatch Redbridge will make every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community.

## **Purchasing**

Healthwatch Redbridge reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

## **Promotion of policy**

Copies of this policy will be freely available to staff, volunteers, members and any other interested parties. A laminated copy of the Statement of intent, together with a named contact for more information, will be placed in a prominent position in Healthwatch Redbridge offices.

## **Travel**

Healthwatch Redbridge recognises that not everyone has access to personal transport or is able to use it and will plan its services and activities with this in mind.

## **Implementation and monitoring**

Monitoring of the Healthwatch Redbridge Equality and Diversity policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the Healthwatch Redbridge Board of Trustees.

Induction for Trustees and new staff will include a briefing on the Equality and Diversity policy. A copy of the E&D policy will be given to all new staff, Trustees and to any member on request.

Training will be provided for employees, board members and volunteers on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that will develop equality and diversity



### **The Board of Directors**

All Directors will affirm their commitment to the Equality and Diversity policy.

The Board of Trustee members (including co-opted members) should aim to reflect a fair balance and representation of the local community and should endeavour to redress any imbalance of under-represented groups.

### **Healthwatch Redbridge policies and procedures**

Other Healthwatch Redbridge policies support our commitment to equality and diversity. These include flexi-time, childcare contributions, parental and dependants leave, annual leave, recruitment, discipline, grievance, harassment, statement of terms and conditions and induction.

