



Equality and diversity statement

Mindsong seeks to promote equality and diversity as fundamental to all its activities, its governance and to the way in which it treats team members, volunteers and everyone it works with in care homes and day centres.

Mindsong strategies and actions are underpinned by a commitment to fairness for all.

Mindsong believes that diversity enriches its delivery, enhances the skills of its management team and volunteers, and contributes fresh ideas and perceptions to its development.

Mindsong will promote the following basic rights for everyone associated with it:

- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be treated fairly at all times

regardless of colour, race, age, nationality, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief, and with consideration of needs for flexible hours and work patterns.

Mindsong appreciates that recent legislative changes place more emphasis on active promotion of equality and celebration of diversity rather than on the simple avoidance of discrimination. The Government's decision to establish a single equality body, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, is expected to increase the profile of equality and to bring with it extra responsibilities in this area and Mindsong will develop its policy and strategy in the light of this new emphasis.

Mindsong and diversity in practice

Mindsong values and relies on the diversity of its trustees, team members, volunteers and the people we work with in care homes and day centres for a rich and changing cultural and social context.

Mindsong will update its policy and practice based on developments in the make-up of society and any new forms of discrimination and injustice that may arise.

Mindsong is required by law to ensure that it complies with a number of duties relating to equalities and diversity.

Legislation now identifies the following six equality strands which are taken account of in any policy and accompanying action plan:

1. Race
2. Gender
3. Disability
4. Religion/Belief
5. Sexual orientation
6. Age

Mindsong recognises the requirement to produce an action plan to cover Race, Gender and Disability equality.

Definitions

Equality is understood to be

- about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfill their potential
- about removing or reducing all forms of unfair discrimination and has been underpinned by legislation
- about breaking down barriers for people in particular groups such as black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, gay men/ lesbian/bisexual/ transgender people, younger and older people, people from different religious and faith backgrounds, and men and women.

Diversity is:

- about including everyone
- valuing differences
- harnessing differences in individuals to the benefit of both the individual and the community
- having a better understanding of the diverse needs of our audiences, employees and community

Mindsong is not complacent about its progress to date, and recognises that there is more work to be done to achieve diversity and equality in all the aspects of its work and practice.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

AREA OF ACTIVITY	WE WILL	OUTCOMES
Services	Broaden and increase contacts and partnerships Train and support therapists and volunteers in inclusive practice	Diverse team, participants and settings Participatory and inclusive delivery
Recruitment	Therapists & Volunteer Co-ordinators Recruit and select from a wide base of professionals Core team members & volunteers Recruit and select team members in a transparent and fair way Promote and sustain an inclusive and supportive work environment Treat part-time and volunteer staff fairly and equally Ensure all team members, trustees and advisers are informed and active in supporting Mindsong's diversity	Fair and open recruitment Broad and fair recruitment mindful of access, equality and representation in appointments and progression Selection from a wide and representative pool of candidates Diverse candidates access volunteer and part-time opportunities Good practice in equality and diversity is reflected and strengthened through Mindsong's governance & policies.
Improving capacity	Appoint a named person responsible for keeping equality & diversity issues on Mindsong's agendas and updating its team members, volunteers, trustees and advisors Ensure training and information maintains and improves familiarity and practice	Well-informed team and trustees, contributing to improved diversity in delivery and practice Diversity and equality approaches in Mindsong are based on legal requirements and best practice

This Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed annually: next review April 2017.