

# Wellspring

centre for psychotherapy and counselling

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY & PRACTICE

### STATEMENT OF POLICY

Wellspring is committed to equal opportunities for all, and to ensuring that all our services are equally accessible to all, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, marital status, ability, religious or political beliefs, employment status, unrelated criminal record or other irrelevant distinction.

Wellspring is opposed to discrimination, whether direct or indirect, which is one of many factors contributing to social isolation and stress.

Our aim is to be available, relevant and inclusive, throughout the community. Our work benefits from including a diverse group of people and we endeavour, within our area of competence, to meet practical challenges raised by disabilities, language problems and other potential barriers.

Wellspring welcomes diversity among its staff and aims to encourage all individuals to realise their full potential and contribute as fully as possible to the life and work of Wellspring. Wellspring aims to create conditions whereby the treatment of staff and applicants for employment is on the basis of their relative merits, abilities and potential.

This Policy applies to all employees, therapists, trainees, volunteers and Board members. Discriminatory conduct may result in action being taken under Wellspring's Disciplinary Procedures.

### OBJECTIVES

#### Objective one

*Area of Operations:* Recruitment, selection and employment of paid staff and trainee placement students.

Wellspring will try to ensure that all its recruitment and selection procedures-- advertising, application forms, short-listing, interviewing and final selection--

are carried out in a way that eliminates discriminatory bias. We will implement such staff development and training as is needed to make our equal opportunity policy effective. We will consider without prejudice applications from disadvantaged and minority groups and endeavour within the limits of our financial resources to offer training and development opportunities to offset initial disadvantages where appropriate. Our conditions of service and standard employment procedures will reflect our aim to treat all our staff as fairly and as generously as possible.

### **Objective two**

*Area of Operations:* Recruitment, training and support of volunteers.

Wellspring will try to eliminate discriminatory bias when advertising for and interviewing volunteers. Our volunteer training programme will feature awareness raising about equality issues.

### **Objective three**

*Area of Operations:* Publicity, publications and public image.

Wellspring's publicity, promotional materials and advertising will strive to avoid discrimination and stereotypical images and expressions. With this in mind we will actively screen our literature and will seek to make Wellspring known and available to all sections of society. A copy of this Equal Opportunities Policy will be made available to funders should they require it.

### **Objective four**

*Area of Operations:* Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Wellspring offers psychotherapy and counselling to individuals, couples and groups including families and young people and seeks to provide a high standard of professional practice that honours and respects the individual.

- Wellspring will work to eliminate discrimination on any grounds against any users or potential users of its services.
- We will, wherever possible, ensure that our services are accessible to everyone, and will not refuse them to any individual, couple, group or family on discriminatory grounds.
- We will endeavour to find a suitable therapist for each referral as far as is possible within the constraints of availability of staff and resources.
- Each Wellspring client will be treated equally in terms of respect for their values, their lifestyle and their culture.

## Objective five

*Area of Operations:* Board.

Wellspring will try to ensure that the composition of its Board does not reflect discrimination against any section of society. Board members will be invited for their skills and experience, and their commitment to Wellspring. No one will be excluded from membership of the Board on discriminatory grounds.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES LEGISLATION

Wellspring recognises its responsibilities under the following pieces of legislation:

- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Rights Act 1996

We will endeavour to act within the spirit of these acts over and beyond our legal obligations as a small charity.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Wellspring will develop implementation plans to ensure the application of this policy across the organisation. These plans will include monitoring and review procedures.

In the event of the introduction of relevant new legislation, this policy will be reviewed. It will be reviewed in the light of any other factors pointing to a need for change, and in any event, no less than once every three years.

## DEFINITION

**Discrimination:** Treating differently because of prejudice, bias, favouritism, bigotry, intolerance.

Unlawful discrimination may be "direct" or "indirect".

**Direct discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably, in the same or similar circumstances, than someone of a different colour, race, nationality, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, health status, age, religious or political beliefs etc.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when requirements or conditions, while possibly appearing fair, have the effect of favouring some individuals within one of the

above groups and not others, for example, an unjustified requirement that all applicants for a post are at least six feet tall, which would rule out the majority of female applicants.

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