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Heart Wood CIO

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Heart Wood's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy sets out our understanding of EDI and outlines how we aim to ensure fair treatment and opportunity for all.

Equality is about fairness, and making sure that nobody is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly. The Equality Act 2010 sets out protected characteristics (age, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation); it is against the law to discriminate against anyone based on these characteristics. Diversity is about recognising and celebrating difference, and inclusion is about making sure that our services are inclusive, welcoming and accessible to all.

A commitment to the principles EDI is fundamental to Heart Wood's core mission to offer unique group counselling to people who are suffering from enduring and complex mental health problems. Our person-centred approach to our work is in keeping with EDI values – we believe in recognising and understanding individuals for who they are, and in offering a non-judgemental, supportive and safe environment for everyone.

Our Trustees encompass this ethos and are committed to embracing the principles of EDI as an employer, a partner and a service provider.

Heart Wood commit to:

1. Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. We offer a completely flexible approach to communicating with and accommodating service users, for example we take time to contact people in the way they prefer and will support them with accessing our service e.g. by organising taxis or by offering lifts. We consider both physical and emotional needs in terms of accessibility and will be proactive in ensuring that we do everything we can to accommodate everyone.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.
3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by employees, trustees, clients, and any other stakeholders in the course of the

organisation's work activities. Any such complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the organisation's grievance policy.

4. Monitor the make-up of the Board of Trustees and the workforce with the aim of encouraging diversity of membership in terms of lived experience, age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion as far as possible.
5. Ensure that everyone who works for Heart Wood, including contractors, staff and trustees, is familiar with this policy and behaves in an acceptable manner true to the person-centred values of Heart Wood, treating others with courtesy, respect and consideration and conducting themselves professionally at all times.

The Heart Wood Board of Trustees has ultimate accountability for compliance with the Equality Act and for ensuring adherence to this policy.