

Name of Policy: Equality & Diversity Date: 17 January 2025 Status: In place Approved by: Board EDI Champion (LL) Signed: Val Farmer (CEO) Review date: January 2027 Version: 4	
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RB Mind Equality and Diversity Policy

1 GENERAL STATEMENT

- 1.1 Richmond Borough Mind (RB Mind) is committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment and the services it provides. No user of RB Mind's services, employees, trustees, volunteers or job applicants should receive less favourable treatment based on any characteristic, including but not limited to the protected characteristics as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation as well as non-legally protected characteristics such as socioeconomic background and housing status.
- 1.2 As an employer and provider of a service to the community, RB Mind accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that no other service user, volunteer, trustee or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated above.
- 1.4 RB Mind recognises that some clients and users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with RB Mind's Equal and Diversity Policy. RB Mind will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible, an approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client. A record will be kept of such situations.
- 1.5 RB Mind recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to employment and the reasonable adjustments it must make to ensure that people with protected characteristics are not discriminated against in recruitment or in the workplace.
- 1.6 RB Mind keeps all its policies under review to ensure that they do not discriminate against people.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 **Who:** This policy applies to all staff, including: senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students, or anyone working on behalf of RB Mind.
- 2.2 **How:** This policy applies to anyone providing support on behalf of RB Mind via any method including: face to face, remotely, online, digital and via telephone.

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- 2.3 **Where:** This policy applies to anyone providing support on behalf of RB Mind from all locations including: office based, working from home, remotely, off-site, non-RB Mind premises and outdoors.

3 KEY CONTACTS

- **Head of Services:** Pritty Rana – Pritty.rana@rbmind.org.uk
- **CEO :** Val Farmer Val.farmer@rbmind.org
- **Chair of Trustees** – chair@rbmind.org

- 3.1 Whilst one or more members of the senior management team, management and/or board of trustees may be named as the lead(s) who champions equality and diversity across the organisation, it is recognised that this is everyone's responsibility.

4 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

- 4.1 Currently, in the UK, we have one major piece of legislation relating to equality in the workplace. Individuals should be aware of this to ensure the law is always adhered to.

- The Equality Act 2010 (see 4.2)

4.2 The Equality Act 2010

This piece of legislation protects people from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

4.3 Who is protected by the Equality Act?

Everyone in Britain is protected. This is because the Equality Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have. Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

- 4.4 The Equality Act (2010) names six types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination – treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Associative discrimination – a form of direct discrimination against someone for being associated with another person who holds a protective characteristic.

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- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone perceived to hold a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination – when a rule or policy applies to everyone but disadvantages someone with a particular protected characteristic.
- Harassment – behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient or someone else present.
- Victimisation – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under legislation.

5 POSITIVE ACTION

- 5.1 RB Mind believes that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough and that positive steps, within the law, shall be taken.
- 5.2 RB Mind is committed to:
- Recognising and developing potential which has not been used before because of past discrimination and disadvantage.
 - Encouraging access and applications from under-represented groups.
- 5.3 Every effort will be made to ensure that the services offered by RB Mind reflect the composition of the community it serves, and we will publish details of service user statistics by gender identity, sexual orientation, age and ethnicity.

6 DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 If any service user, volunteer or employee feels that they have been, or are being, discriminated against in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with one of the following:
- Service lead
 - Office manager
 - Operations manager
 - CEO
 - Chair of Trustees
- 6.2 All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously and in line with the Complaints Policy.
- 6.3 Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious and may involve using the Disciplinary Policy.

7 RECRUITMENT

- 7.1 In most circumstances, job vacancies will be advertised internally to encourage service users and volunteers to apply.

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- 7.2 RB Mind will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply race, sex or other stereotyping.
- 7.3 All advertisements will state that RB Mind is seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer. A copy of RB Mind's Equal Opportunities Statement will form part of all application packs.
- 7.4 RB Mind will take such positive steps, within the law, to redress imbalances in its work force. Examples of these include:
- inviting people with protected characteristics to interviews where they meet the minimum requirement
 - encouraging a diverse range of applicants where there is a shortage of diversity in the organisation and that lack of diversity is hampering the organisation's ability to achieve its goals
 - welcoming people with lived experience of mental health difficulties to apply for paid and voluntary roles within the organisation.
- 7.5 Application packs/ads will make it clear that life experience, as well as formal qualifications and work experience, is valid.
- 7.6 In the interests of operating an effective Equality and Diversity Policy, RB Mind will monitor certain information about job applicants. All such information will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff.
- 8 POSITIVE DISCLOSURE AND BARRING (DBS) DISCLOSURES AND RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**
- 8.1 As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, RB Mind complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- 8.2 We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience. A DBS check is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS check is required, applications contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- 8.3 Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent to a designated person within RB Mind and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

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- 8.4 All applicants are made aware of this policy so that they know if they are subject of a DBS Check they are aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and we will make a copy available on request.
- 8.5 Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar individuals from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of any offences.
- 8.6 We ensure that all those in RB Mind who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained in Equality and Diversity and can identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- 8.7 At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- 8.8 In the event of an individual becoming an employee of RB Mind, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in dismissal.
- 8.9 Any information given will be kept completely confidential, in line with the Data Protection Act, and will be processed fairly and lawfully and only disclosed in appropriate circumstances. The information we may store on individuals will be accurate, relevant, kept securely and not held longer than is necessary.

9 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- 9.1 Subject to the requirements of doing their job/role, employees/volunteers are expected to complete their mandatory training during their probation period.
- 9.2 Employees/volunteers will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job or personal development.
- 9.3 Training courses will be offered during working/volunteering hours whenever possible.
- 9.4 It is the responsibility of every member of staff and volunteer to participate in the equality, diversity and inclusion training provided.

10 WORKING CONDITIONS

10.1 Pregnancy

RB Mind recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will sympathetically consider any requests for such changes.

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10.2 Antenatal Care

Time off with pay will be given to pregnant employees (both full and part-time) to attend antenatal classes and checks, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

10.3 Flexible Hours and Job Sharing

Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees. Requests for job sharing or part-time working to meet employees' needs for shorter hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements.

10.4 Accessible Buildings

RB Mind will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all its premises are fully accessible. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

10.5 Use of Language and Materials

10.5.1 Staff, volunteers and service users will avoid and challenge the use of language which in any way seeks to belittle others.

10.5.2 Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken.

10.5.3 All materials used or developed by RB Mind will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

11 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1 Each of the committees has the responsibility to ensure equality and diversity is upheld, according to the legislation.

11.2 The individual at RB Mind responsible for legal compliance is the Office Manager, who reports to the Operations Manager/Chief Executive.

12 REPORTING CONCERNS

12.1 The Operations Manager/Chief Executive and Chair will decide as to whether serious incidents and issues are reported to relevant external bodies. This is to ensure a rapid response to situations.

12.1.1 **Illicit Behavior** will be reported through the Operations Manager/Chief Executive to the police.

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12.1.2 **Abuse** will be reported through the Operations Manager/Chief Executive to the social services, relevant local council and the police.

13 RECORD KEEPING

13.1 Any concerns raised by service users, volunteers or staff shall be recorded internally and subsequently reviewed within 6 months to decide what necessary steps should be taken to resolve the issue(s).

14 INDUCTION, TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

14.1 All trustees, staff and volunteers will be given an overview of the Equality and Diversity Policy at induction.

14.2 Updates to this policy will be communicated to all staff and volunteers through the Operations Manager and/or Office Manager.

15 MONITORING AND REVIEW

15.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or following a serious incident(s) to ensure that it complies with legislative and regulatory requirements and best practise.

15.2 All RB Mind policies must be applied consistently and in line with this Equality and Diversity Policy.

16 RELEVANT POLICIES

- Recruitment of Staff Policy
- DBS Checking Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Trustee Recruitment & Induction Policy
- Volunteer Policy

Version Number	Author	Purpose/Challenge	Date
01	KM (Operations Manager)	Review & Update	Sept 2015
02	KM (Operations Manager)	Review & Update	Feb 2020
03	RE (Operations Manager)	Review & Update	25 May 2022
04	VF (CEO) / LL EDI Champion	Review and Update	17 Jan 2025