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New Horizon Youth Centre - Diversity Statement and Policy

A: Statement of Intent

1. New Horizon Youth Centre is committed to recognising and valuing difference and ensuring fairness and equality; and recognising and seeking to redress inequality and disadvantage wherever possible.
2. As a service provider to vulnerable and homeless young people and as an employer, we aim to be empowering, supportive and to offer as much flexibility as possible in order to help each individual realise their full potential as users of New Horizon Youth Centre and as employees. We believe that this approach is key and central to promoting and developing diversity.
3. We recognise that true diversity in our community and within the staff group also involves a willingness to act, where necessary, aimed at combating the effects of existing barriers to fair and equal treatment. Within society certain groups are unfairly discriminated against – for example on the grounds of race, gender or gender identity, disability, sexuality, age and class - and are, as a result, disadvantaged in terms of their access to services and employment. We will, where appropriate and where possible, seek to positively redress the effects of this discrimination. Any action we take will be legally compliant and consistent with our approach of making users and staff feel valued and respected.
4. We also recognise that many people have suffered disadvantage and barriers to progress for all kinds of reasons related to them as an individual and not because of their personal characteristics. This may include homelessness, employment economic or domestic circumstances, involvement with the justice system. For this reason, our commitment to diversity includes being supportive, positive and open minded.
5. Our **commitment** is firmly founded on the belief that:
 - to best support our diverse clients and users and to offer services that are personal and adaptable, we should have a diverse staff team that will respond to our clients as individuals;
 - to attract, retain and motivate the most talented staff, we need to reach out to all sections of the community; provide a working environment in which everyone feels valued, respected and able to contribute.

B: Policy

1. To make our commitment a reality, we will **develop and regularly review strategies and plans of action**. New Horizon Youth Centre recognises that to achieve a good level of diversity our action plans will need to cover both long and short-term actions.
2. **Actions may include:**
 - integrating diversity issues into our corporate strategy, objectives and targets so that it is a mainstream and core concern;
 - ensuring management support and buy-in through specific diversity objectives for managers and teams;
 - clear and consistently applied policies and procedures within recruitment and selection, training and development and other areas of employment and people management;
 - training for managers and staff to achieve competence in promoting diversity; and
 - monitoring the implementation and outcomes of the diversity action plan to measure and evaluate effectiveness.

3. Scope of the Policy

New Horizon Youth Centre's Policy on Diversity & Equality applies equally to the following areas:

- the undertaking of any task for, or on behalf of, New Horizon Youth Centre, particularly the provision of our services;
- the support and advice we provide to clients and customers and our relationship with customers;
- the recruitment, employment, training and career development of staff; and
- the recruitment, training and activities of the Board of Trustees and other volunteers;
- our governance arrangements;
- the behaviours of staff, volunteers and Trustees, who are always expected to actively uphold and promote the goals and requirements set out in this Policy;

This policy does not form part of any individual employee's contract of employment with New Horizon Youth Centre.

4. Objectives of the Policy

Our policy is intended to set out the general framework through which we seek to ensure:

- full consideration of diversity and equality issues in the design of new projects, services, and other initiatives;
- an environment in which our clients, staff, Board members and volunteers feel valued and respected and are:
 - treated fairly;
 - recognised and supported on ability and merit for their contributions; and
 - given equal access to opportunities for growth and advancement.
 - protection of our members, staff and Board members against harassment, discrimination and intolerance;

- fair and transparent recruitment and selection procedures which ensure that all job and Board appointments are made on individual merit alone;
- the provision of training and development opportunities on an equitable basis for all our employees, supporting every single person to maximise their individual potential;
- employment practices which treat people fairly on the basis of their individual merits and abilities;
- that our workforce reflects the cultural and ethnic makeup of the community we serve. This may include where possible and appropriate, adoption of appropriate positive initiatives to promote equality of access for people from certain groups, especially where these groups are under-represented either among our members or at any level within our workforce;
- complying with all relevant statutory requirements in respect of non-discriminatory practice, and with partner and /or funder performance expectations on diversity and equal opportunities.

5. Framework for Implementation

- **Written policies, procedures and guidance notes** on all aspects of New Horizon Youth Centre's activities will be drafted and reviewed with diversity and equalities issues in mind incorporating specific provisions on diversity and equality.
- While a **Diversity Policy and associated Codes of Practice** are essential, they are not enough to ensure that diversity is an ongoing, dynamic, reality for the organisation and all its stakeholders. Therefore, New Horizon Youth Centre will also develop and implement:
 - clear diversity objectives and a plan of action, which will be fully integrated into our business strategy, audit and risk management and other work plans;
 - specific diversity objectives and targets for managers and teams as necessary and as part of our overall performance management systems.

6. Responsibility for Implementation

- Day to day responsibility for implementation and monitoring lies with the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- New Horizon Youth Centre's Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for oversight and assurance regarding the implementation of our policy, strategy and plans and for monitoring their effectiveness.
- All New Horizon Youth Centre staff have an obligation to ensure the positive application of this policy in all aspects of their own work. Wilful breaches of the Policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- To support implementation, all staff and Trustees will be offered training, support and appropriate resources (such as guidance and information).

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

- The leadership team will report as required, but at least annually, to the Board of Trustees or appropriate sub-committee and task groups of the Board on the implementation of diversity in relation to both services and employment. The reports will be based on both quantitative and qualitative data and will monitor and evaluate:
 - performance against numerical benchmarks;
 - progress in implementing an action plan against agreed objectives and timescales;
 - and
 - the effectiveness/outcomes of our strategy, policy and procedures in promoting diversity and equality for clients and staff.
- In addition, we will measure staff and client perceptions of our effectiveness in promoting diversity through qualitative monitoring tools such as:
 - exit interviews;
 - staff and member satisfaction surveys;
 - data and diversity related analysis of access to, use and the impact of our services;
 - a review of our diversity statement and policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose;
 - continuous engagement with staff and clients to ensure action plans remain relevant;
 - continuous engagement of Board Trustees as owners and promoters of the statement and policy.