



Aurora Foundation for People Abused in Childhood

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Aurora Foundation for People Abused in Childhood (Aurora) is committed to a positive policy of equal opportunity in the delivery of its services and in its recruitment of team members. It is determined that the principles of equality of opportunity will underpin service provision and it will use its best endeavours to make its services accessible to all those who need or want them.
- 1.2 Only with the help and commitment of present and future team members will Aurora be able to provide sensitive and effective care and support to all its clients. Aurora recognises that only by developing and using the skills of all team members and in recruiting from all sections of the community will it be best able to meet its core values and objectives.
- 1.3 Aurora's Equality and Diversity Policy aims to prevent not only covert acts of discrimination, but also to highlight requirements and practices, which, although possibly unintentional are discriminatory in nature. It is intended to aid the development of good employment and service delivery practices in respect of present and future team members and clients respectively.
- 1.4 Equal opportunity at work is about having respect for every individual, treating team members and clients with dignity, courtesy, fairness and consideration, welcoming and accepting differences and trying to meet the needs of all people. This is the basis from which the elimination of all discrimination and prejudice is best likely to develop.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Aurora is a registered charity working to make a difference to the lives of adult survivors of childhood trauma.. To achieve this Aurora positively welcomes diversity in its workforce and its clients and recognises the richness that this brings to the organisation.
- 2.2 Aurora recognises that the society it operates within is diverse and comprises of people and communities with a variety of interests, abilities and needs. It also recognises that certain groups in society experience discrimination directly and indirectly. Consequently, Aurora is actively committed to opposing all forms of discrimination.
- 2.3 Aurora will take active steps to implement policies and procedures to counter direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability (including mental illness), religion, age, marital status or political beliefs.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all matters relating to the working conditions of team members and to the delivery of Aurora services. It applies to individuals or groups whether they are actual or potential team members, volunteers, trainees/students or individuals and groups using Aurora services.

- 2.5 Anyone applying to work at Aurora will be assessed and selected irrespective of age, race, social background, sex, sexual preference, colour, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, marital status, religion or real or suspected HIV/AIDS status. Instead they will be assessed and selected on the basis of justifiable job requirements and their relevant merits and abilities.
- 2.6 Aurora will provide services to its clients without any form of unlawful discrimination and will communicate to clients an expectation of the treatment our team members are entitled to receive in any interactions.

3. HOW WE WILL MAKE SURE THIS POLICY IS PUT INTO PRACTICE

- 3.1 This policy will form part of the Management Committee's Work Plan and will be reported on to the Board of Trustees bi-annually.
- 3.2 Training and Induction into this policy will be a key feature of an organisational Core Training Programme for all new and current team members.
- 3.3 This policy will be one of our key policies that all new team members will be inducted into, via their detailed Induction and probation programme.
- 3.4 The Management Committee will monitor this policy annually.

4. WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

- 4.1 All paid team members at Aurora are currently self-employed and this Policy applies to all, whether full-time or part-time. It also applies to volunteers (i.e. counsellors in training) and to Trustees.

5. DEFINING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 5.1 Equality is essentially about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. In the workplace, this may be about ensuring equal access to training or advancement. It may be about ensuring that all clients who meet the criteria are able to access services, whatever their differences. Equality is backed by the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2 Equality is often summarised in terms of:
 - Equal Access
 - Equal Treatment
 - Equal Shares
 - Equal Outcomes

- 5.3 Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a work culture and work practices that recognise, respect, value and embrace difference for the benefit of the individual and the organisation. It is about harnessing the beneficial power of difference in a positive, constructive and learning way.
- 5.4 Diversity is less about the individual and more about the collective mixture of individuals, cultures and organisational expertise that provide the richness of experience that we can all benefit from; the differences that make us unique and the commonalities that connect us. Diversity also brings into focus the issue of Social Inclusion, so important in good mental health.
- 5.5 Equality and Diversity are not inter-changeable terms and describe two different although strongly inter-dependent states. You cannot have real and meaningful equality of opportunity if difference is not recognised and valued.

6. POLICY AIMS

6.1 Our policy aims are divided into two distinct categories:

- Delivering Services
- Aurora Team (self-employment and volunteers)

6.2 Delivering Services

We aim to take action in the following areas:

a) PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We will make sure that we always consider equality and diversity when planning and delivering services.

- For this policy to be effective, we recognise that equality and diversity need to be fully understood and embraced by all and become a central part of what we do routinely, every day.
- We will do this by ensuring that equality and diversity are part of our core training. We will ensure that equality and diversity are issues that are discussed in all supervisions and in all team meetings.
- The Management Committee will include equality and diversity in its reporting to the Board of Trustees and appropriate and effective use will be made of all equality monitoring data across the organisation.

b) PROVISION AND EVALUATION OF SERVICES

We will provide fair and appropriate services that meet the wide range of needs of all clients signposted to Aurora.

- We will ensure, via robust care and support planning that we are meeting individual needs across all services. We will develop services and continually improve them to ensure we are providing value for money. We will, wherever possible, benchmark our services for quality and efficiency, against other similar providers.
- When reviewing our services, we will consult clients about their needs and about how effective our services are. We will conduct regular (at least annual) client satisfaction surveys and use the results to improve our services. We will strive to survey every Client who is discharged from, or leaves our services, to receive feedback on their experiences.
- We will work to include in reviews or consultations, all those who might be affected by our services or decisions we make and where necessary and possible, will make special arrangements to include people who are often left out of traditional types of consultation (such as people whose main language is not English).
- If any client or group of clients believe they are being treated differently and unfairly, we will try to understand and deal with those differences.
- We will ensure that all clients have the right to complain about poor or inappropriate services and ensure that these complaints are equally and fairly addressed.

c) ACCESS TO SERVICES

We will make it easier for people to access our services via agreed signposting routes, including people from under-represented groups

- Where possible, we will seek to initiate the lowest level possible for accessing our services. Wherever possible, we will permit and indeed encourage self-referrals and referrals from carers, relatives and friends.
- We will ensure excellent links are set up, maintained and developed, between our services and marginalised and excluded groups and communities.
- Within available resources, we will do our best to ensure information about our services is clear, accessible and in a form which is easily understood by all.
- Whilst recognising that English is the primary language in which Aurora conducts its business, we will make every effort, within available resources, to make information available in alternative forms and languages when required.
- We will aim to make reasonable adjustments to remove any substantial disadvantages experienced by disabled people accessing our services.

d) COMMUNITY RELATIONS

We will promote good relations within the community by working with the community and our partners.

- We will engage positively and constructively within the communities in which our clients live, working with our partners to ensure that the community becomes a place in which our clients feel accepted and valued and where difference is seen as an opportunity, not a threat.
- We will share the lessons we have learnt with others and we will share information on best practice and new ways of working.

e) REDUCTION OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

We will reduce social exclusion by providing better services targeted on social inclusion and working seamlessly with others.

- Social Exclusion describes what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, poor health or disabilities, poor housing, low incomes and high crime. We will work together with our Clients and our partners to deliver services that focus on reducing social exclusion and that measure social inclusion outcomes.
- We will audit and assess all our services against Social Inclusion indicators and seek to make improvements wherever possible.

6.3 Aurora Team (self-employment and volunteers)

We aim to provide a workplace in which everyone can feel respected, comfortable and supported, and where no-one is discriminated against or harassed because of their: race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity.

Team members have a right:

- a) not to be discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, either for their own characteristics, a mistaken belief about their characteristics or because of their association with others;
- b) not to be subjected to harassment on grounds which are unlawful;
- c) to challenge discriminatory or offensive behaviour / language and to bring this to Aurora's attention;
- d) to make a complaint when they have grounds to feel they have been unfairly treated, and not to be victimised for exercising this right.
- e) for their culture and identity to be accepted;
- f) to be valued and supported by their manager and colleagues; and
- g) for their contributions to be acknowledged, respected and where possible, acted upon.

In order to ensure that these rights are fulfilled we will take action in the following areas:

a) RECRUITMENT

We will ensure that our recruitment process is fair and non-discriminatory.

- To serve a diverse community well, we need to make sure (as far as possible) that our team members come from a wide range of backgrounds that reflect the community in which they work. Our recruitment procedures provide equal opportunities and give guidance on strategies designed to attract a diverse workforce.
- We will take account of people's individual needs to make sure that our recruitment does not discriminate against anyone. To achieve this we will develop and monitor our recruitment policies and procedures.
- When assessing vacant posts, we will do so looking at the diversity of the local client group, identifying gaps and encouraging applications from under-represented groups.

b) TRAINING IN EQUALITY ISSUES:

We will ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are understood and acted on by all our team members.

- All team members will receive training on this policy during their induction, and their understanding will be assessed.
- We will work to continually improve the way we develop our team members relating to equality and diversity. We will also develop our links with external providers of team member's training and development.
- We will ensure we continue to be accredited by Investors in People (IIP). IIP set standards on how team members are informed and developed, some of which relate to equality.
- We will set aside enough resources for training and development to meet our equality objectives.
- We will ensure that the organisation is a part of local training networks in all the areas in which we operate, to ensure that we can take full advantage of locally available opportunities.

c) DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

We will encourage all team members to reach their full potential.

- Our core training programme will deal with the personal development needs of team members. Team members will be properly supported by their managers, through appraisal, supervision and ongoing feedback.
- Where team members have individualised needs we will work to ensure that these are taken into consideration in providing support, training development opportunities and promotion, including consideration of reasonable adjustments.

- Training and development will be available through induction, supervision and appraisal and a range of other opportunities available to all team members throughout the year.
- Where appropriate, opportunities for promotion will be advertised throughout the organisation and decisions will be made in accordance with objective selection criteria.

d) DISCRIMINATION

We will work with team members, support networks, to get rid of discrimination.

- We will not accept any kind of discrimination including bullying, harassment and victimisation and we have specific policies and procedures that say how we deal with these.
- We will also make sure team members are aware of their rights and responsibilities, so that they can tackle discrimination. We will train team members to recognise and deal with discrimination, make it easy for team members to report discrimination and support those who have suffered discrimination.
- We will monitor our pay awards to ensure there is no discrimination on the basis of gender.
- We will, where possible and within available resources, consider making reasonable adjustments to hours, work or workplace when recruiting, to ensure fair treatment for all.
- We will encourage team members to take out a grievance when they have grounds to feel they have been unfairly treated.

e) PROMOTION OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We will work with team members and support networks to promote equal opportunities.

- We aim to provide a workplace in which everyone can feel respected, comfortable and supported, and where no-one is discriminated against or harassed because of their: race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity.
- We will promote equal opportunities through human resource procedures relating to terms and conditions of employment, recruiting, redundancies, grievance and disciplinary, promoting, transferring, training, developing and supporting team members.
- We will do our best to keep all team members informed of organisational development and changes, as a means of fostering good working relationships and an environment of mutual trust and respect.

7. DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

7.1 The Equality Act 2010 says that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

7.2 In line with the Equality Act 2010 it is Aurora's policy not to discriminate against disabled persons whether in, or applying for, employment. To achieve this policy the following procedures must be applied:

- Job advertisements will provide equal opportunity to all applicants and will not discriminate in any way against disabled persons.
- Where Aurora is aware that an applicant is disabled then reasonable adjustments to the interview will be offered (see below). Disabled applicants for employment will not be considered less favourably than those without disabilities.
- Appointments of Disabled People will be made on the same terms and conditions as other comparable team members without disabilities.
- Consideration will be given to making reasonable adjustments to the workplace and methods of working to remove substantial disadvantages for disabled team members. In order to do this, there is a responsibility on members of team members to make Aurora aware if they have any impairments or conditions which may constitute a disability under the terms of the Act.
- Disabled team members will be given equal opportunity in applications for training and promotion and will not be considered any less favourably because of their disability.
- Any acts of discrimination because of disability should be reported to the relevant executive director.
- Allegations of discrimination because of disability will be investigated and disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found to have acted in any way that is in breach of this policy.
- Acts of discrimination because of a mistaken perception of disability or because of a person's association with a disabled person will be treated in the same way as acts of direct discrimination.
- Aurora will also take action to ensure that its conditions of employment, benefits, policies, procedures or practices do not have the effect of putting a disabled person at a disadvantage in comparison to team members who are not disabled, unless there is objective justification for this (for example protecting a person's own health and safety).
- Aurora will also ensure that disabled people are not treated unfavourably because of something arising from their disability unless there is objective justification for this treatment.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

7.3 Aurora has a duty to take reasonable steps to overcome substantial disadvantages for any disabled person who:

- Works for Aurora
- Applies for a position, or says that they are thinking of applying for a position with Aurora

7.4 Aurora will consider reasonable adjustments where it is known or could reasonably be expected to be known that someone is a disabled person. This means doing everything we can reasonably be expected to do to find out, without asking questions that violate a person's dignity.

7.5 How this will be done:

Applicants

We will ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments to the interview. If a disabled person does not ask for adjustments but turns out to need them, consideration will still be given to making adjustments although what is reasonable in these circumstances may be different from what would be reasonable with more notice.

New team members

All new team members will be asked to make any relevant disclosure when they are offered employment. They will also be given an opportunity to disclose any condition during induction.

During work at Aurora

All team members will be informed that it is their responsibility to inform a manager if they develop any condition which may mean that reasonable adjustments are necessary. However, if there are any changes in a person's performance or conduct then the line manager should explore possible reasons for this and give the person further opportunity to disclose any relevant information.

The Duty

It should not be assumed that reasonable adjustments are required but if so there are three areas which must be considered:

- 1: Changing the way things are done.
- 2: Making changes to overcome barriers created by the physical features of the workplace.
- 3: Providing extra equipment or getting someone to do something to assist the disabled person.

7.6 Adjustments may be proposed either by Aurora or by the disabled person themselves. Examples of reasonable adjustments may be:

- adjustments to the workplace to improve access or layout;
- giving some of the disabled person's duties to another person;
- changing the working hours, e.g. flexi-time, starting later or finishing earlier;
- reducing working hours, eg part time working or job share (this will lead to reduced pay also);
- time off, e.g. for treatment, assessment, rehabilitation;
- training for disabled workers and their colleagues;
- getting new or adapting existing equipment, e.g. chairs, desks, computers;

- modifying instructions or procedures, e.g. by providing written material in bigger text or in Braille;
- improving communication, e.g. providing a reader or interpreter, having visual as well as audible alarms; and
- providing alternative work (this should usually be a last resort).

7.7 If a proposed reasonable adjustment requires assistance from other workers then, with the disabled person's permission, the other workers will only be given as much information about the person's disability as is necessary for them to understand what they need to do. If the disabled person does not agree to this, it will be explained that Aurora cannot make the adjustment unless they are prepared for some information to be shared.

7.8 When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable we will consider:

- how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage the disabled person would otherwise experience
- its practicality
- the cost
- Aurora's resources; and
- the availability of financial support.

7.9 Where cost is an issue the disabled person will be advised to contact Access to Work which can give advice and support and also help with extra costs.

Recording and Monitoring

7.10 Once it is disclosed that a person is disabled, information about their disability should be entered on the Record of Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Form (Appendix 1). This form should also be used to record any reasonable adjustments proposed and made and any steps towards investigating or implementing reasonable adjustments, which may include consulting medical professionals, with team members consent.

7.11 This form should also list any reasonable adjustments which have been agreed arising from the disability risk assessment (detailed in Aurora's Health and Safety Policy). It is advised that the risk assessment be completed prior to the consideration of reasonable adjustments on other grounds.

7.12 The form should be updated whenever further reasonable adjustments are requested or proposed and both the disabled person and the manager should ensure that reasonable adjustments are reviewed at least annually, and whenever there are any changes to the person's work, their environment or their condition.

8. THE LAW

8.1 Aurora aims to comply will all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, both in employment practices and provision of services.

9. TEAM MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES TO THIS POLICY

- 9.1 Ensuring that equality of opportunity and treatment are encouraged at Aurora is the responsibility of all those who work here. This Policy sets out the responsibilities of each level of Aurora, but all team members and the Board have to take responsibility for their own behaviour and ensure it is consistent with and acceptable within the terms of this policy and its aims. This means you should:
- a) recognise and respect the diversity of team members and clients in terms of culture and identity;
 - b) avoid the use of language or behaviour that is likely to discriminate or cause offence to others e.g. racist, sexist, homophobic language or behaviour;
 - c) challenge the use of such language or behaviour and bring this to the attention of appropriate line managers or executive director;
 - d) be aware of your prejudices and be willing to make use of the opportunities available to work on them;
 - e) recognise that clients have a right to a service that takes account of their background;
 - f) deliver on any equality targets agreed in your service or individual work plan;
 - g) meet any equality indicators for which you are responsible;
 - h) identify, address and further equality issues in practical ways in your day-to-day work;
 - i) take part in team and organisation discussion about how to improve equality within Aurora; and
 - j) support and co-operate with any equality initiatives you are asked to undertake.
- 9.2 It is a condition of service that team members adhere to this policy and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken. Any team member who is found to be discriminating in any way whatsoever will be subject to discipline and could, as a result of a proper investigation into the seriousness of the offence, be dismissed.
- 9.3 Team members are reminded that if a fellow member makes a complaint of discrimination to a tribunal and names them as well as Aurora, if the claim is found to be proven, the team member may face personal financial liabilities. For some acts a team member could also be charged under criminal law.
- 9.4 Workers and managers are required to familiarise themselves with this policy to avoid inadvertent problems. This policy will be covered during the induction of all new workers and awareness of the policy and principles around it will be covered regularly within supervisions.

10. MONITORING THE POLICY

- 10.1 To measure how effective this policy is, we will monitor it and take action where necessary. The Management Committee will monitor this policy 6-monthly will report on a bi-annual basis to the Board of Trustees.

APPENDIX 1

AURORA FOUNDATION FOR PEOPLE ABUSED IN CHILDHOOD RECORD OF DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Name of Team Member

Disability

SECTION A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulties experienced due to disability while at work ▪ Any tasks or performance areas specifically affected by disability ▪ Any other substantial disadvantage ▪ If none, state 'N/A' 	Date reported
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

SECTION B

Reasonable Adjustments (if none necessary state 'N/A')			
Adjustment	Date Proposed	Proposed by	Accepted? If not state reason
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

SECTION C

Action Plan			
Action	By Whom	By When	Complete?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

SECTION D

Reasonable Adjustments Agreed Following Risk Assessment (see Health and Safety Policy (GI/P/10) (If none necessary, state 'N/A')	Date of Assessment
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Date

Recorded by

Signature of Team member

A copy of this form should be sent to Aurora's Head Office.

Reasonable Adjustments should be reviewed at least annually, and whenever there are changes to the person's work, environment and/or condition.