

# Little Bird SOS

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### Statement:

The Little Bird SOS is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our Directors, management committee, staff, volunteers and community members, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our Director, management committee, staff, volunteers, partners and community members.

### Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Policy is to:

- Encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- Ensure equal access to services and opportunities
- Ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation currently in force
- Promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation
- Create environments free from harassment and discrimination
- Maximise the use of resources in the best interests of community members and the general public
- Confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the organisation's work
- Ensure there is clear commitment from staff/volunteers and the management committee to accept and implement this policy in their work for the organisation.
- Ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that the organisation premises and services are accessible to all people

We will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, age, disability, HIV positivity, working pattern, caring responsibilities, trade union activity or political beliefs, spent criminal convictions – or any other grounds. See protected characteristics below covered by the 2010 Equality Act.

<b>1. Age</b>	Age refers to a person being of a certain age (such as 65 years old) or belonging to a particular age group (such as 40 - 45 year olds).
<b>2. Disability</b>	A disabled person refers to a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

<b>3. Gender Reassignment</b>	Gender reassignment is the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
<b>4. Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	Marriage is defined as a 'union between two partners'. Both heterosexual and same sex couples can get married. Currently, same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'.
<b>5. Maternity and Pregnancy</b>	Pregnancy is the condition of expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In a non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth. It includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
<b>6. Race</b>	Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.
<b>7. Religion or belief</b>	Religion refers to a person's faith. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
<b>8. Sex</b>	Sex refers to a person's preferred identity - he/him - she/her - they/them
<b>9. Sexual orientation</b>	Sexual orientation refers to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

**We will demonstrate our commitment by:**

- promoting equality of opportunity and diversity within the communities in which we work and with all our partners and workforce
- aiming to build a workforce which reflects our customer base, within the diverse communities in which we work, with the aim of having parity of representation across the workforce
- encouraging recruitment from groups currently under-represented in the department and their career progression once employed
- treating our customers, colleagues and partners fairly and with respect
- promoting an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and tackling behaviour which breaches this
- recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that people make
- providing support and encouragement to staff/volunteers to develop their careers and increase their contributions to Little Bird SOS through the enhancement of their skills and abilities
- building in legislative requirements and best practice to all our service delivery and employee/volunteer policies and procedures and supporting these with appropriate training and guidance

**Responsibility**

The Director has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all Staff and volunteers also have a duty as part of their involvement with Little Bird SOS to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

Little Bird SOS will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

The Organisation recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the Organisation. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

### **Policy Enforcement**

All incidents of **direct discrimination** are will be dealt with under the complaints procedure.

Incidents of **indirect discrimination** will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the complaints procedure

Incidents of **victimisation** or **harassment** will be dealt with in accordance with the Little Bird SOS complaints procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with by the management committee.

Any volunteer, including management committee member and paid staff, found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from the Little Bird SOS volunteer register.

Any member of the Little Bird SOS staff found in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave the organisation.

Any community member found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on their actions and where necessary appropriate action will be taken.

### **Monitoring**

The Organisation regards the collection/analysis of data as vital in informing change and its relevance. .

Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the Director will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.

If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging volunteers or restricting service users, the management committee shall take action to re-adjust the policy.

Signed: 

Date: 24th January 2019

Review Date: 24th January 2021