



Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- Advonet is a charity in its own right and provides the platform for a consortium of Independent Advocacy providers in Leeds. Advonet aims to serve all the people of Leeds, with their diverse backgrounds, experiences and support needs.
- We are aware that some groups and individuals are discriminated against and denied the level of access that is granted to others.
- We are committed to taking positive steps to ensure that we treat everybody with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all.
- Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make our services easier to be involved with. This includes the services we subcontract with to provide advocacy in Leeds. Maybe you would prefer an advocate of a certain gender, or ethnic background; you may need an interpreter or have mobility issues.
- As set out in the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristics for which we will treat everyone with the same attention, courtesy and respect are:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)
 - Race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin or national origins)
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- In addition to these, Advonet is also committed to treating everyone with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of:
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - Gender identity
 - Caring responsibilities
 - Social class.
- Advonet is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advancing equality of opportunity; and
 - Fostering good relations within and between our communities with a view to building good community relations
- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we do not unlawfully discriminate.
 - Our commitment is to create an environment both for staff and people of Leeds:
 - That promotes dignity and respect for all;
 - Where people are treated fairly and according to their needs;
 - Where no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated; and
 - In which individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

2. This policy applies to:

- All Board members and Directors;
- All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, and all job applicants
- All service users and those applying to access services;
- All contractors and sub-contractors.
- All volunteers

3. Roles and responsibilities

We all have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. For this to happen we have a responsibility to ensure that our own actions and behaviours are equally fair and that we respect the dignity of others.

Less favourable treatment should be challenged directly, either by the recipient or by any witnesses. Where this is not possible, for whatever reason, then the complaints procedure can be used.

4. Good practice

In **all** our activities we will:

- Give due regard to equality and diversity when reviewing existing and developing new strategies/ policies and services/ functions to ensure that we
 - secure flexible and fair working practices,
 - provide excellent services
- Engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to Advonet) with our decision making processes
- Deal with all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation promptly and with sensitivity to all those involved
- Take all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations within and between our communities.

In delivering our services we will:

- Assess the needs of our existing and potential service users and ensure fair access to our services. This includes making reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to use our services;
- Ensure the availability of appropriate support services. This includes translation and interpretation and making key information available in a range of alternative formats,
- Provide access points for reporting hate crimes.

In employment, learning and development we will:

- Ensure equal pay;
- Assess the needs of our existing and potential disabled employees and provide appropriate reasonable adjustments, and
- Take appropriate positive action in recruitment and selection.

5. Support to implement the policy

During induction this policy will be provided and training offered / identified with new employees as part of their 1:1 with their supervisor.

On-going training will be identified by management, which may be for individuals or for the team including Board members and Directors.

6. Monitoring

All our policies contribute to our overall aims around equality. Key policies – such as those relating to employment and service delivery are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity and protect people against unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We collect and analyse data relating to recruitment, employment and access to services, to identify trend areas of inequality, and inform appropriate action.