

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

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### **Equalities and Diversity Statement**

RUILS Board has agreed the following vision statement which outlines the type of Equalities and Diversity organisation that RUILS wishes to aspire to.

Our vision of RUILS is of a modern charity which, through its Equalities and Diversity policy, ensures that it

- Maintains a discrimination-free work environment
- Values and develops its employees and volunteers' skills and abilities, regardless of gender, race, disability, age, religion/belief or sexuality
- Delivers relevant, culturally sensitive and fully accessible services to elderly and disabled people, people with learning disabilities and those that use mental health services within the borough
- Monitors and tackles inequality in service delivery through the targeting of services to excluded social groups
- Consults, engages and is aware of the views of the whole of the community
- Has an awareness of cultural and other forms of diversity and recognises how this enriches the life of the borough
- Uses the energies and creativity of other voluntary/community organisations to provide culturally specific services
- Ensures a working environment in which people are able to give their best; that is free from harassment and bullying and also ensures that all decisions will be based on merit.

Equalities involve recognising and accepting that discrimination means that some people have not had equal access to services and employment. It also involves recognition of diversity which may require services or opportunities to be developed specifically to meet different needs.

Service delivery requirements may vary considerably. Equalities means providing RUILS's services fairly and in a way that meets the diverse needs of elderly and disabled people, people with learning disabilities and those that use mental health services in Richmond upon Thames.

In the employment of staff, equalities means ensuring that there is equitable access to all employment opportunities. Equalities will help to ensure that the appropriate people will be appointed, on clear job-related criteria, to deliver RUILS's services to high standards (please see the Equality and Diversity Policy in the Staff Handbook).

## **Statutory Obligations**

RUILS has statutory obligations to promote equalities through the following key pieces of legislation.

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Race Relations Act 1976 and its amendment of 2000
- Commission for Racial Equalities Code of Practice
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995 & 2005)
- Disability Rights Commission Employment Code of Practice
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006

RUILS also has a responsibility to address specific aspects of equal opportunity or discrimination through other pieces of legislation. (These can be found in appendix 1 - Glossary of Equal Opportunities Terms, Concepts and Processes).

RUILS will have a responsibility to promote equality on the basis of age through working to the standards set out in the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 which came into force in October 2006.

RUILS will have responsibilities to promote equalities on the grounds of sexual orientation through working to the standards of the Government's Code of Practice on Discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation in Employment, which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003.

RUILS also has a responsibility to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act (1998) which came into effect on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2000.

## **Equalities and Diversity**

Implementing an Equalities and Diversity policy will ensure that:

- RUILS is working actively towards providing services and resources relevant to all elderly and disabled people, people with learning disabilities and those that use mental health services in the borough, and are perceived by them as doing so.
- RUILS is committed to promoting equality for everyone and reflecting the full diversity of the community in all its services.
- RUILS will strive to provide equality of access to all our services for all elderly and disabled people, people with learning disabilities and those that use mental health services in Richmond upon Thames.
- RUILS will provide services in a manner that is sensitive to the individual whatever their background and circumstances.

- RUILS will represent the needs of our diverse communities to other agencies and make Equalities and Diversity key guided principles in all of our strategic partnership work.
- RUILS workforce reflects the increasing diversity of the community it serves and builds their capacity to respond to changing patterns of local need.
- RUILS recognises the strength that lies in difference and the positive contribution that all forms of diversity make to the richness of life in the borough. We will take positive action to realise our declared Equality and Diversity objectives.
- RUILS is committed to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of:
  - \* Class
  - \* Age
  - \* Disability
  - \* Race (including colour, ethnic origin, nationality, natural origin)
  - \* Gender (including sex, marriage, gender re-assignment)
  - \* Transgender / Transsexual
  - \* HIV / AIDs status
  - \* Marital status
  - \* Religion or belief
  - \* Caring responsibility for dependants
  - \* Sexual orientation
  - \* Unrelated criminal conviction

Detailed definitions of each can be found in Appendix A – Glossary of Equal Opportunities Terms, Concepts and Processes.

To achieve Equality and Diversity will require a whole organisational approach that focuses upon its implementation into the following areas:

- Service Delivery
- Employment Issues
- Partnership work with Statutory, Voluntary and Independent Sectors

These key areas will enable RUILS to address and include Equalities and Diversity at every stage in policy, planning and service delivery.

### **Supporting Statements of Equalities & Diversity.**

RUILS has a commitment to the principle and operation of equality of opportunity in terms of the delivery of quality services to elderly and disabled people, people with learning disabilities and those that use mental health services and to its' employment practices. At the centre of our Equalities & Diversity strategy is our determination to effectively tackle all forms of discrimination, whether based on race gender, disability, transgender / transsexual status, sexuality or age that exists both within RUILS and the local community.

RUILS has agreed the following supporting statements of principle:

## **Equality for Disabled People**

RUILS is committed to:

- Challenging the common assumption that disability equals inability. RUILS considers that the major obstacles faced by disabled people are the loss or limitation of opportunities that prevents disabled people taking part in the mainstream life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barrier.
- Endorsing the right to disabled people to lead an independent life and will base its policies and its provision on the principle of eradicating the various barriers to the full participation of disabled people.
- Working to eliminate unintended, institutional discrimination against disabled people in its policies, procedures, practices both in term of service provision, employment and volunteering. We will also ensure its future policies, procedures and practises are proofed in terms of disability equality
- Accepting its responsibilities to inform itself of ways to meet the needs of disabled people, including complying with the requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995
- Applying the Social Model of Disability
- Keeping its recruitment process under review to ensure that it does not discriminate against applicants
- Ensuring that disabled candidates who meet the criteria for employment are offered an interview.
- Acknowledging that disabled people can also experience other types of discrimination or disadvantage and, in its work to achieve equality for disabled people, it will ensure full consideration of the needs of older people, Black and Minority Ethnic people, lesbians and gay men, those with caring responsibilities and women.

## **Equality on the basis of Age**

RUILS is committed to:

- Expressing its concerns about the discrimination experienced both in seeking employment and when in employment by people on the grounds of their age.

RUILS is also concerned about any age related discrimination when seeking to access or when using RUILS's services

- The belief that age-related discrimination, based on a wider prevalent ageism, which ascribes negative assumptions to employees and potential employees on the grounds of age is unjustifiable and that this can deny RUILS access to the skills and experience of diverse age groups
- Recognising that ageism or age related discrimination affects both older and younger people. However, RUILS also recognises that the older you become, the more intense the problem of discrimination on the grounds of age.
- Working to eliminate any unintended institutional age discrimination in its employment related policies, procedures and practices.
- RUILS is further committed to ensuring that future policies, procedures and practices are equal opportunities based in terms of age
- A recruitment policy, which ensures that ability to do the job, and no other factors, including age, will constitute criteria for appointment. The only exception to this policy will be those where there is a statutory age qualification.
- Acknowledgement that older people can also experience other types of discrimination and in its work to achieve equality for older people, it will ensure full consideration of the needs of black and minority ethnic older people, disabled older people, older lesbians and gay men, older carers, older women and other relevant disadvantaged groups.

## **Race Equality**

RUILS is committed to:

- Opposing the socially diverse and harmful effects of racism, which subjects black and minority ethnic people to negative attitudes and treatment resulting in racial discrimination, hatred and harassment. The end effect of racism is to deny equality of opportunity to black and minority ethnic people
- Working to eliminate racism within its internal structures and organisational culture as well as encouraging non-discriminatory behaviour and attitudes. In this way we will seek to eradicate institutional racism in its many forms, including words, conduct or processes that advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin
- Working to eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination against black and minority people in its policies, procedures and practice, both in terms of service provision employment and volunteering. We will also ensure that future policies, procedures and practices are equal opportunities based in terms of the race equality issues

- The provision of equal access to its services and equal treatment of its employees, volunteers, job applicants and the people who use its services, regardless of their colour or ethnic origin. We will also take the necessary steps to ensure the views of the black and minority ethnic communities are taken fully into account as an integral part of RUILS's consultation processes.
- Striving to ensure that the increasing diversity of the borough results in a representative workforce, in recognition that this will create a stronger and more effective organisation
- Recognising that racial discrimination and disadvantage impact adversely upon different communities in different ways and that this results in issues of different relevance to the various needs of the different black and minority ethnic groups to ensure that service delivery and employment practices are responsive and relevant to all black and minority ethnic groups
- Acknowledgement that black and minority ethnic people can also experience other types of discrimination or disadvantage and, in the pursuit of racial equality and social justice, it will ensure full consideration of the needs of black and minority ethnic older people, disabled people, lesbians and gay men, carers, women and other relevant disadvantaged groups.

## **Equality for Women**

RUILS is committed to:

- Openly stating its concerns about the discrimination faced by women. RUILS recognises that women constitute the majority of its workforce and a large proportion of its service users,
- Assessing the impact of its policies and practices on women and feeding the outcomes of such processes into future decision making and service planning,
- Accepting that the effects of structure, procedures and individual behaviour can be sexist even if there is no specific intent to sexually discriminate,
- Providing equal access to its services and equal treatment of its employees, volunteers and of people who use its services regardless of their gender,
- Working to eliminate unintended institutional discrimination against women in its policies, procedures and practise both in terms of service provision, employment and volunteering. RUILS is further committed to ensuring that future policies, procedures and practices are proofed in terms of gender equality issues,
- Developing family friendly and flexible working arrangements to ensure that women, who still carry the vast burden of caring responsibilities, can pursue a career and reconcile it with their other commitments,

- Recognising that women can also experience other types of discrimination and disadvantage and in its work to achieve equality for women; it will ensure full consideration of the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic women, disabled women, lesbians, people with caring responsibilities and other relevant groups.

## **Equality for Lesbian and Gay Men**

RUILS is committed to:

- Acting upon its concern about the discrimination faced by lesbians and gay men. The discrimination can range from stereotyping through institutional discrimination to homophobic violence. The effect of such discrimination is to deny equality of opportunity to lesbians and gay men,
- Striving for provisions of equal access to its services and equal treatment of people who use its services and its employees who are lesbian and gay,
- Recognising the extent of the problem of discrimination against lesbian and gay men cannot be measured because of the pervasiveness of homophobia. The label of widespread prejudice experienced by lesbians and gay men prevents all but a small minority being open about their sexuality,
- Assessing the impact of its policies and practices on local lesbian and gay men and feeding the outcome of such scrutiny into future decision making and service planning,
- Accepting that the measures to tackle other forms of discrimination may not necessarily be appropriate to deal with homophobia and issues relating to lesbian and gay men. A key test is to actively assist the development of a non-discriminatory workplace environment in which lesbians and gay men are free from harassment and feel safe in coming out,
- Ensuring the right of lesbians and gay men to be open about their sexuality in all circumstances,
- Working to eliminate unintended discrimination against lesbian and gay men in its policies, procedures and practices both in terms of service provision, volunteering and employment.
- RUILS recognises that lesbians and gay men can also experience other forms of discrimination or disadvantage and in its work to achieve equality for lesbians and gay men it will ensure that full consideration be given to the needs of older people, Black and minority ethnic people, disabled people, women, people with caring responsibilities and other relevant groups

## **Responsibility**

The Board of Trustees will assume primary responsibility for ensuring that

RUILS upholds and implements this policy. It is the responsibility of the chief Executive Officer to plan and provide services to uphold and develop this policy. All RUILS trustees, staff and volunteers will be expected to adhere to the organisation's policy in the course of their work or on behalf of RUILS.

An initial guidance on managerial and staff responsibilities under the policy is attached as Appendix B –Managerial & Staff Responsibilities.

## **Training**

RUILS recognises the importance of providing appropriate, high quality training for staff and volunteers to enable them to carry out their obligations under the Equal Opportunities, Equalities and Diversity Policy.

The following training priorities have been identified:

- Induction – to ensure the full understanding of the Equal Opportunities, Equalities and Diversity Policy as part of the induction process for new staff, volunteers and Board members
- Recruitment - to ensure that all those responsible for the selection and recruitment of staff promote good practice and adopt a pro-active approach to equality and diversity (Please see Recruitment Policy in the Staff Handbook).
- RUILS's services – to ensure that staff who are in contact with or attempting to make contact with minority groups acquire and develop the necessary skills.

## **Recording and Monitoring**

RUILS will demonstrate its continuing commitment for the implementation of this policy by regular review and monitoring.

It is essential that RUILS has an objective, factual means of assessing its effectiveness in implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure equality and diversity.

All information relating to staff and volunteers required for monitoring purposes will be undertaken and held in compliance with RUILS's Data Protection Policy.

Continuous monitoring of the recruitment process will ensure that the recruitment and selection process is non-discriminatory. All monitoring information will be held in compliance with RUILS's Data Protection Policy. Furthermore to ensure equality of opportunity, all recruitment and selection will be undertaken in compliance with RUILS's Recruitment Policy.

All services will regularly provide statistics on their clients; these will be monitored by the Chief Executive to ensure equality in service delivery and to improve further planning. Details will also be provided to our funders.

Date Adopted:	January 2011
Last Review:	
Next Review:	January 2012

## Appendix A:

### Glossary of Equal Opportunitites Terms, Concepts & Processes

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The following definitions are frequently used equalities related terms, concepts and processes:

- **Ableism** – This is a set of ideas and assumptions reflected in attitudes, behaviour and practice which discriminates against people who are differently abled from the majority of able bodied people
- **Ageism** – is discrimination against people based on assumptions and stereotypes about their age. These stereotypes are based on “perceived” notions of an individual’s ability and potential (e.g. people over 50 may be considered to be economically unproductive, less able or willing to adapt to change, more difficult to train and a less worthwhile investment). Ageism can be directed at individuals at any age, but it is most commonly targeted at younger or older people. People and organisations acting on negative stereotypes of age lead to discrimination and disadvantage
- **Caring Responsibilities** – The recognition of the responsibility for the care and welfare of a dependant person or persons. The impact of caring responsibilities disproportionately falls upon women within our society, adversely restricting their employment, education and training opportunities
- **Celebrating diversity** – RUILS will place a positive aspect on all diversity and viewing difference as an asset within both its own workforce and the wider community
- **Data Collection, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review System** – This is a system which provides detailed information on patterns of service usage by clients. The system facilitates the collection of qualitative and quantitative service data, its analysis, evaluation and input into the review of patterns of employment practice and service provision. Such systems are invariably designed around the following characteristic stages/processes.

The system should identify specific problems relating to employment and the relevance and accessibility of RUILS Services. It should also feed into a policy/service review process that should lead to the adoption of pro-active strategies designed to address the problems identified.

- **Definition of Disability** – The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) provides the following definition of disability

“A disabled person has physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, long-term, adverse effect on their ability to carry out day to day duties.”

- Direct discrimination – involves less favourable treatment of a person, on racial grounds, than others would be treated in the same circumstances
- Indirect Discrimination – involves the application of a requirement or condition which, intentionally or not, has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group
- Domestic Violence – The infliction of physical and mental violence within a domestic setting. It is usually the case that the victims of domestic violence are female and the perpetrators their male husbands or partners. Because the offence is committed within a private sphere, and the frequent and quite natural reluctance of women to report instances, the police have in the past been reluctant to take action against perpetrators. However, the problem is now widely recognised and many local authorities are working in partnership with the Police to assist them in addressing the issue
- The “Double Shift” – This term refers to the realities of any women’s domestic situation and how it fits in with their employment. Essentially, many women have to complete a “double shift” in the sense that once their duties at work are finished for the day, they then have to take on their domestic duties (i.e. housework, caring responsibilities, etc) in the evening. It is still the case that in the majority of households, domestic duties fall upon the female member of the family
- Gender – Being male or Female
- Homophobia – This is an irrational fear of lesbians and gay men
- Institutionalised Racism – Institutionalised racism is concurred with racial discrimination that has been incorporated in to structures, processes and procedures of organisations, either because of racial prejudice or because of failure to take into account the particular needs of black and minority ethnic groups
- Lesbian / Gay men – Lesbians and Gay men prefer these terms rather than “homosexual”. Lesbians also prefer the term lesbian rather than “gay woman” because it reflects their separate identities and experiences. The order of reference is also important: the term “lesbian and gay men” is preferred because it seeks to challenge the false assumption that male behaviour is defining and female behaviour is diminutive
- Sexual Orientation - Sexual orientation describes the direction of an individual's sexuality, often in relation to their own sex or gender. Common terms for describing sexual orientation include bisexual, heterosexual and lesbian or gay
- Gender Re-Assignment – also known as Transgender – this is a term applied to a variety of individuals, behaviours, and groups involving tendencies that

diverge from the gender role (woman or man) commonly, but not always, assigned at birth, i.e., people who were assigned a gender, usually at birth and based on their genitals, but who feel that this is a false or incomplete description of themselves.

## **Appendix B:**

### **Managerial and Staff Responsibilities**

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#### **Responsibility of Trustees, All Staff and Volunteers**

Having a Policy statement on equalities and diversity does not in itself ensure that discrimination ceases within RUILS. The statement needs to be translated into practice. Its principles must inform all the work of every member of staff. With this in mind, it is vital that each of us accepts his/her responsibility for learning about, understanding and acting in the spirit of the Equalities and Diversity Policy. Discrimination and harassment are serious workplace and community issues. In terms of the workplace, RUILS's disciplinary procedures made this clear. It should also be borne in mind that individuals can be legally liable for discrimination under the relevant legislation.

Every member of staff, volunteers and trustees is charged with responsibility for contribution to the creation of a positive and supportive work environment. Similarly, these principles should be upheld in terms of service delivery and the execution of RUILS other functions. In particular, not only should the following behaviours be avoided by staff, but should be positively challenged.

- Any manifestation of behaviour that is perceived as personal harassment or bullying
- The intentional or unintentional use of ageist, sexist, racist, homophobic or other forms of language and images that reinforce stereotypical images
- The unfavourable treatment of individuals or groups in society because of their difference to what is perceived as the norm, including making assumptions about people
- The use of hostile or aggressive language or actions towards individuals or groups in society. Jokes and "off the cuff" comment that are, or can be perceived as discriminatory and liable to reinforce negative images and stereotypes.

The base line requirement of individuals is that they treat others in a fair and equal basis. Negative and discriminatory assumptions should be challenged. All staff need to appreciate the way in which diversity in the workforce strengthens the capacity of RUILS's ability to service local people.

#### **Responsibility of Line Managers**

All RUILS managers have a special and particular responsibility to ensure that they are both fully aware of RUILS Equalities and Diversity Policy and are working to apply it to their own service areas. At the most basic level, line managers should be preventing discrimination, both direct and indirect, conscious and unconscious. Managers are charged with promoting good relations between people of different groups in society and actively challenging prejudice in all its forms. They must

ensure that the provision of services and the execution of other functions in their areas are carried out fairly and without discrimination. This means in practical terms, working to provide equal access by all sections of the community to services and the execution of other functions in your area and to eliminate any barriers or obstacles to achieving this. The objective must be to develop and maintain relevant and fully accessible services that meet the needs of the whole community.

Good Equalities & Diversity Policy and practice in service delivery means:

- Providing good quality, relevant and fully accessible services
- Treating each client as an individual in their own right
- Recognising the specific needs and experiences that come with their membership of a particular group in the community
- Developing an awareness and sensitivity of the barriers that obstruct the relationship between particular groups in the community and RUILS and the way that it excludes people from receiving a quality service
- Implementing consultation and service monitoring, evaluation and review arrangements and ensuring that this data is fed into policy and service development
- Challenging and dealing with inappropriate behaviour and stereotyping both in the workplace and community and willingly participating in arrangements to record, report and deal with racist incidents, domestic violence and other hate crimes
- Introducing, promoting and participating in initiatives which promote Equal Opportunities and celebrate diversity.

It does not mean:

- Providing a standard service to all members of the community
- Treating all people in the same way
- Being politically correct

Similarly, RUILS should be an environment which is free from physical or verbal abuse, bullying and harassment, where staff with different backgrounds can feel welcome, comfortable and valued. Where this is not the case then managers have specific responsibility to challenge such behaviour and, if necessary, take action under RUILS's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Managers should also foster a culture in which the members of staff feel confident in challenging such behaviour in the workplace and, in the case of it re-occurring, seeking recourse to the grievance procedure. All such challenges and grievances should be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated, prior to a decision being taken on what action is appropriate.