



Equality and Diversity Policy

INTRODUCTION

DASL believes that those involved with services –employees, volunteers and service users - have a right to expect to be treated fairly and considerately. These rights impose duties and responsibilities upon others at all levels in the organisation. Individuals have the right to expect that they will be provided with a service for their benefit, to be consulted and involved in all matters concerning them, to be treated with dignity and with a right to confidentiality and privacy.

The Principal Objectives of the Policy

1. DASL at all levels will regularly and continually monitor and evaluate its practices and policies to ensure that services are delivered in accordance with the philosophy of equality and diversity.
2. That the same high standard of practice, exercise of skills, and application of resources, will characterise work with all clients and professionals.
3. That the management of service delivery actively seeks to ensure a fair provision of resources across the project, so that people who experience disadvantage and discrimination are not further disadvantaged.
4. The policy is a declaration of the fundamental rights of all people to equality of service. Such a service includes a right to complain and to have their views taken into account in the planning and reviewing of services.

SECTION 1 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

- 1.1 DASL seeks to ensure that equality and diversity principles underpin all areas of the organisation's work and service provision.
- 1.2 DASL's long term aim is that the composition of the workforce should reflect that of the communities that it serves.
- 1.3 DASL recognises that many people and groups suffer discrimination and face serious barriers when trying to fulfil their true potential. It also recognises that not all forms of unreasonable and unfair discrimination are the subject of legislation. It is the aim of this organisation to take positive steps to redress discrimination, to improve equality of opportunity and to combat any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reasons not directly related to their ability to do a job for this organisation or to their eligibility to receive services from us.
- 1.4 It is unlawful to discriminate against people because of their gender or gender assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin, sexuality/sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, or because they are disabled, married or in a civil partnership, a member of a trade union, work part time or on a fixed-term contract.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against people either because they are perceived to have a certain characteristic or because they associate with someone who has a certain characteristic. However we recognise that people may experience discrimination for many additional social, educational and economic

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reasons such as their language, health, caring responsibilities, trade union activity, where they live, how they speak and whether they work flexibly. This policy will apply equally to all these circumstances.

- 1.5 DASL will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or abuse of people who are members of staff or of people connected with the services provided by DASL.
- 1.6 DASL regularly updates its procedures in line with legislation, best practice guidelines and feedback from staff and service users. DASL will adhere to all relevant legislation in force at the time.

SECTION 2 MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND DELIVERY MECHANISMS

- 2.1 DASL's Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the equality and diversity policy. It is however the responsibility of the Chief Officer to implement, monitor and evaluate the equality and diversity policy in terms of employment practice and service delivery. The CEO is also under a duty to ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly kept informed of the policy's implementation and the implications of the Board of Trustees' decisions and policies for equality and diversity issues.
- 2.2 All employees and Board of Trustee members will be informed that an equality and diversity policy is in operation and that they are bound to comply with its requirements. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of DASL staff members, funding agencies, job applicants and those using the services of DASL.
- 2.3 The "Equality and Diversity Statement" above shall be displayed in our offices, visible to staff and visitors. Staff and trustees are to be given a copy of the whole policy upon appointment/election and whenever the policy is modified.
- 2.4 DASL's grievance and disciplinary procedures will be used to deal with any complaints about discrimination, harassment or bullying involving staff.

Complaints from people using the organisation's services will be through the complaints procedure for DASL.

- 2.5 DASL seeks a broad and representative Board of Trustees.
- 2.6 It is expected that when staff or Trustees represent DASL on the committees of other agencies they will endeavour to ensure that equality and diversity principles and practices are adopted by those agencies.

SECTION 3 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

- 3.1 DASL aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of the policy.
- 3.2 DASL regards discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, clients or of others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct. Condoning such behaviour could also be treated as a disciplinary offence. As well as disciplining the perpetrator(s), we will give appropriate support to people who complain of harassment of themselves or others.

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3.3 Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices generally will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the equality and diversity policy.

3.4 DASL will attempt to accommodate staff requests to work flexibly, whether part-time or some other working arrangement, for whatever reason, so long as agreement is consistent with the needs of the organisation. DASL will also encourage initiatives designed to help staff who wish to return to work after a career break.

DASL's terms and conditions of employment allow for paternity and partner leave in addition to standard maternity leave, in accordance with current legislation.

3.5 We recognise and will comply with our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled staff and to enable them to do their job without unnecessary difficulty. Staff are encouraged to inform HR at the earliest opportunity if they require assistance due to a current or new disability.

3.6 We accept our obligation not to discriminate against applicants and employees on the basis of their religion or belief. We will try to accommodate employees' religious beliefs by:-

Allowing time and if possible a place for prayers during the working day and at the workplace.

Considering employees' dietary requirements in catering for staff and when providing facilities for staff to eat and store food.

Allowing staff of particular faiths to take their holidays for religious festivals and other religious observance.

Trying to arrange job interviews or other important work meetings at times when they do not clash with important religious festivals.

Not imposing a dress code with which people of a particular religion cannot comply.

3.7 DASL will not discriminate on any grounds when selecting employees for promotion or training and during recruitment,

3.8 DASL will take whatever positive action is required where it can be shown that under-representation of any particular group has occurred in recruitment. Where appropriate and where legally permissible, employees from under-represented groups will be given training and encouragement in order to promote equality and diversity within DASL.

3.9 All training opportunities will be published widely to all appropriate employees and not in such a way as to exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants from a particular group.

SECTION 4 SERVICE DELIVERY

4.1 DASL seeks to ensure that its services are accessible to all sections of the community served by DASL. In particular DASL will ensure that this applies to those most at social, economic or educational disadvantage.

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- 4.2 DASL will make public its commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered.
- 4.3 DASL will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.
- 4.4 DASL will adopt a Complaints Procedure that will include its objectives with regard to equality and diversity in service delivery.
- 4.5 DASL will attempt to find ways of making our service accessible to everyone, including people for whom English is not a first language, people with visual or hearing impairments, and people who cannot easily travel.
- 4.6 DASL will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its activities are carried out in premises which are accessible to people with mobility difficulties. In the event that the premises operated by DASL are not accessible for particular individuals, DASL will arrange alternative meeting places. This will include committee meetings.
- 4.7 DASL will be sensitive to the particular needs of service users by trying to provide for example, translations and, when providing food, having regard to religious and other dietary requirements.
- 4.8 DASL will be concerned especially with people and communities that are disadvantaged and excluded and will find ways to support the representation of their interests.

SECTION 5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 5.1 DASL will regularly evaluate its services and the effectiveness of its equality and diversity policy, by a variety of means.
- 5.2 Monitoring may be carried out by DASL to provide the data for this regular evaluation. For instance, DASL may ask clients using our services, job applicants, volunteers and trustees for information about their ethnic origin, disability, age or other personal information. We will only do this for a specific defined purpose such as collecting statistical data for funders, for research or for our own monitoring to evaluate this policy's impact.
- 5.3 DASL will be sensitive to groups and individuals and will have due regard for the principles of data protection when seeking information. Where sensitive information is gathered, those responding will be explicitly informed of the purpose and that they are at liberty to withhold the information. All monitoring information will be securely stored, aggregated and anonymised.

SECTION 6 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

- 6.1 DASL's commitment to equality and diversity is an active one. This document should be amended on a regular basis as part of this active commitment.
- 6.2 DASL's equality and diversity policy will be reviewed annually as an integral part of the business of the staff team and Board of Trustees

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- 6.3 DASL will also seek to keep abreast of new developments in Equality and Diversity practice and actively seek information on this issue.
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Date Agreed by Board of Trustees 2nd June 2011

Review Date 2nd June 2013

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Appendix 1.

HARASSMENT / DIGNITY AT WORK

DASL's objectives will be best served if staff work in harmony with each other and with those to whom they report. Each member of staff should respect other members of staff and realise that behaviour that they may find acceptable may not be so regarded by others.

Managers and supervisors shall act and react towards employees in a manner which respects their dignity. They shall work to ensure that those under their management and / or direction act in a similar way in their relationships with each other.

Harassment at work in any form is entirely unacceptable and each member of staff carries responsibility for their own behaviour under the policy.

Harassment

ACAS defines harassment as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.'

Harassment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. Harassment at work in any form is entirely unacceptable to DASL, whether or not it is because of a characteristic protected by law.

It is unlawful to harass someone or discriminate against them on the grounds of a characteristic they are perceived to have and it does not matter whether they actually possess that characteristic.

The law also protects someone who is associated with another person who has a protected characteristic, for instance because of their partner's race or because their parent is disabled.

Harassment may be persistent or an isolated incident. Actions or comments which are demeaning or unacceptable to the recipient can amount to harassment, regardless of the intention of the perpetrator. In extreme or repeated situations, harassment may amount to bullying or abuse. ACAS defines bullying as 'offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.'

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on grounds of age, race sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- Copying memos/emails that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected.

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- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and/or constant criticism
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face, they may be by written communications, visual images (for example pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues), electronic email, phone, and automatic supervision methods – such as computer recording of downtime from work, or recording of telephone conversations – if these are not universally applied to all workers.

Staff should not be subjected to unwarranted or vexatious complaints.

DASL will provide support for employees who allege harassment and those against whom harassment has been alleged.

DASL will take appropriate action to protect employees from harassment by third parties during the course of employment. This may include harassment by DASL clients, members of the public and employees of other organisations. It is important that such incidents are reported by employees to their line manager

A proper investigation of complaints against employees will take place using the DASL's disciplinary procedure.

Fair procedures will be followed and instigated promptly to minimise potential stress both for the alleged harasser and the complainant. Where possible and appropriate, complaints should be resolved informally.

Process

Informal procedure

Wherever possible employees who believe that they have been the subject of harassment, should tell the person responsible that they find their behaviour offensive and ask them to stop. If the individual feels unable to do this themselves they may ask, their Union representative, their line manager or a colleague of their choice to do it for them.

If the alleged harassment continues, or the complainant feels unable to speak directly to the alleged harasser, it may be helpful to write to the person concerned clearly indicating what is considered to be unacceptable behaviour.

Formal procedure

If the behaviour continues (or the informal procedure seems inappropriate) the matter should be dealt with as a grievance. It should be reported in writing to the complainant's manager giving details of the incidents, when they occurred, any possible witnesses and any discussion or correspondence under the informal procedure. After receipt, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the alleged harasser's manager (if this is not also the complainant's manager) who shall carry out an investigation.

As an alternative to the above, which may be inappropriate, (e.g. because the alleged harasser is the complainant's manager), the complainant may raise the matter with the Chief Officer or Director, who shall act as a confidential advisor. This advice may mean the

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employee needs to make a formal complaint to the manager of the person alleged to have carried out the harassment. The alleged harasser's manager shall then conduct an investigation.

The investigation shall be carried out under the terms of DASL's disciplinary procedures. In certain circumstances the alleged harasser may be suspended without prejudice on full pay before, during or after the investigation.

During the investigation or resultant disciplinary hearing the complainant and alleged harasser will have the right to be accompanied and/or represented by a trade union representative or colleague of their choice.

If the allegations are upheld disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal will result.

If the outcome of the investigation and/or disciplinary hearing is that no formal disciplinary action is to be taken, no record of the complaint will appear on the alleged harasser's personal file.

The complainant will be informed that a disciplinary investigation has been held and may be told of the broad findings and outcomes of this investigation, provided this information does not breach the obligation of confidentiality to the alleged harasser. The complainant may lodge an appeal under the grievance procedure if they are not satisfied that the matter has been properly dealt with.

Victimisation

Employees will not be victimised in any way for complaining about discrimination or racial, sexual or other forms of harassment or for giving evidence about such a complaint.

The Relevant Legislation

Employment Rights Act 1996
The Equality Act 2010

Related Policies

Terms and Conditions of Employment
Recruitment policy
Disciplinary Policy
Grievance Policy
Staff Cover and Leave policy
Flexible Working policy

I understand and agree to abide by the above Equality and Diversity Policy.

Staff Name

Staff Signature

Date