

<p>Name of Policy: Equality & Diversity</p> <p>Category of Policy: Governance</p> <p>Status: Final</p> <p>Approved by: Trustees</p> <p>Date: May 2021</p> <p>Review date: May 2022</p>	 <p>The logo for Evolve Community Counselling Charity features the word "evolve" in a green, lowercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized green leafy branch. Below the word "evolve" and the branch, the full name "Community Counselling Charity" is written in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font.</p>
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1. Policy Purpose

Evolve Community Counselling Charity (Evolve) is committed to promoting equality and diversity. This policy is applicable to all employees, counsellors, contractors, event participants and visitors.

In this policy, for ease of reference and understanding, the term “employee” is used for statutory employees, self-employed counsellors, self-employed contractors, trustees and volunteers.

2. Policy Statement

Evolve is committed to achieving equal opportunities in the services it provides and in employment, and aspires to greater diversity in order to reflect the community we serve.

The Equalities Act of 2010 summarised 9 protected characteristics. No user of Evolve’s services (clients), employee, volunteer, applicant for a job or appointment as a volunteer or trustee should receive less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic. These are as follows:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

The 2010 Act also names six different types of discrimination.

These are:

1. Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic
2. Associative discrimination - this is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic

3. Discrimination by perception - this is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
4. Indirect discrimination - this can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.
5. Harassment - this is behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Someone can also complain about a behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.
6. Victimisation - this occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.

As an employer and provider of services to the community, Evolve accepts a responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that no client or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated above.

Evolve Counsellors will recognise that some clients may have extreme judgemental views. However how they work with this will depend on each individual client. But the counsellor will maintain their own ethical approach to equality and diversity

This document sets out policies and action which follow from this commitment. It will be brought to the attention of all trustees, employees, carers, volunteers and service users.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The Trustees of Evolve have overall responsibility for the operation of this policy, but all employees have a responsibility, as part of their involvement with Evolve, to do all they can to ensure it works in practice.

3.0 SERVICE DELIVERY

Evolve makes positive steps to enable disadvantaged or under-represented groups to make use of its services by collaborating with other charities in these sectors.

4.0 PHYSICAL ACCESS

Where feasible, services will be provided in spaces which are accessible for those with a physical disability, especially those in wheelchairs. Where access is not possible, efforts will be made to ensure that the client concerned can be seen elsewhere.

5.0 USE OF LANGUAGE

Employees will avoid and challenge the use of language which in any way belittles people due to a protected characteristic. Where the language used has a personal impact on others and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or hurtful or offensive, disciplinary action will be taken.

6.0 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

No employee should be subject to sexual harassment – i.e. unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature involving verbal sexual abuse, physical contact or repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive.

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint and disciplinary action will be taken.

7.0 RECRUITMENT

Recruitment procedures will encourage all sections of the community to apply, with the aim of having a workforce and trustee body reflecting the composition of the local community.

All appropriate opportunities will be taken in advertising or application packs to make it clear that Evolve seeks to be an effective equal opportunities employer.

Evolve will collect anonymous data from job applicants regarding their equalities data, and will review every 6 months to review whether we are receiving applications from all sections of the community, and if changes are needed to our job advertising.

Job descriptions, person specifications and application forms will reflect only the requirements of the job.

No applicant will be treated less favourably than any other in the whole recruitment process based upon a protected characteristic.

8.0 SUPPORT & TRAINING

It is mandatory for all employees to read the equality and diversity policy.

Evolve will seek to support its employees in the operation of this policy through supervision, training and monitoring.

9.0 COMPLAINTS

If any client, employee or job applicant feels that they have been or are being discriminated against in any way they are entitled to pursue the matter as a formal complaint.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious and may involve use of the disciplinary procedure.

10.0 MONITORING

Monitoring of equalities data will be done on a regular basis of at least every 6-months.

The Director will bring to the attention of the Trustees any complaint of discrimination, harassment, or other unacceptable behaviour, with the results of investigation and outcome.

Evolve will review its performance under this policy, and the policy itself, annually.