**NNLS DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKERS DROP IN**

Registered charity no 1177599

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

## 1. Policy Statement

The NNLS Destitute Asylum Seekers Drop in (DAS) is committed to providing equal opportunities and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in every aspect of its activities. DAS's commitment extends to building fairness into all that it does through:

- Eliminating all forms of inappropriate and unlawful discrimination;
- Listening to and working with all stakeholders to develop an environment that is based on equality of opportunity, dignity and mutual respect
- Taking seriously any complaints about unequal treatment made by volunteers, service users or other stakeholders and dealing with them appropriately.
- DAS is also committed to ensuring that the Drop in environment is free of harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- DAS will not victimise someone because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

## 2. General Principles

DAS will aim to prevent discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics such as:

- gender or gender identity
- marital or civil partnership status
- disability
- race, colour, nationality or ethnicity
- age
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- pregnancy or maternity

## 3. Definitions of different types of discrimination

For the purposes of this policy, DAS recognises the following types of discrimination.

### 3.1 Direct Discrimination

This describes circumstances where an individual is treated less favourably than another in comparable circumstances based on their personal characteristics. For example, it is direct discrimination to choose a man over a woman in order to have more men in a team. Direct discrimination can be justified in some circumstances if it can be shown that it is necessary for the purposes of the work. For example, organisations providing counselling for women victims of domestic violence may refuse to employ men.

### 3.2 Indirect Discrimination

This describes a provision, criterion or practice that is applied equally across a group but would be detrimental or cause disadvantage to a proportion of that group and which cannot be objectively justified. An example of indirect religious discrimination could be requiring all male employees or volunteers to be clean shaven where there was no objective and

justifiable reason. In this case Sikh and Muslim men would be unable to comply with such a criterion without contravening their faith and therefore it would be discriminatory.

**3.3 Harassment**

This describes circumstances where there is unwanted conduct related to an individual's sex, race, age etc. which violates their dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him or her to work in, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct. Harassment can consist of a single act.

**3.4 Bullying**

Bullying is a repeated pattern of behaviour, usually involving an abuse of power. Similarly to harassment, it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the victim to work in, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

**3.5 Failure to Make Reasonable Efforts**

This applies where physical features or the way that work is organised disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable efforts are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

**3.6 Victimisation**

This exists where an individual is treated less favourably than others because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

**4. Equal Opportunities in Practice**

The DAS board of trustees has ultimate responsibility for oversight of the Equal Opportunity policy.

This policy will be monitored periodically by the Board of Trustees to judge its effectiveness and it will be updated to incorporate any changes deemed necessary following such reviews and in accordance with changes in the law.

**4.1** DAS ensures fair practices in all aspects of volunteering and service delivery including recruitment, training, development and discipline.

**4.2** Person specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of any role. Candidates for all aspects of volunteering will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the role, taking into account any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of decisions except where objectively justifiable.

**4.3** DAS will ensure discriminatory practices are removed from its policies and procedures where these are identified.

**4.4** DAS is committed to resolving complaints quickly and fairly and in keeping with this policy any complaint of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be handled sensitively and will be treated seriously.

**4.5 Volunteers' and Service Users' Responsibilities**

- DAS expects its volunteers and service users to behave in a way that embodies the spirit of the Equal Opportunities Policy. Volunteers or service users who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

- Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against volunteers, service users or third party service providers will result in disciplinary action up to and including exclusion of the volunteer or service user from the project. This includes the encouragement or support of any discriminatory acts.

- Volunteers and service users should not participate in any activity that contradicts the spirit of this policy. If they are asked to do so they should refuse to participate and should report the matter to their team leader. If the volunteer or service user is in a position of authority they should give clear instructions to stop any such activity and should consult with those responsible for management of the Drop in.

**4.6 Complaints**

Anyone who wants to make a complaint about equal opportunities may contact their team leader or the DAS Board of Trustees, which must address the issues raised in a timely manner and in accordance with the DAS complaints procedure.

**5. Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees every two years from 1 February 2021.

Date of last review: 1 February 2021