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**Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network (NMWN)**

**Equal Opportunities /Equality & Diversity Policy**

**1. Policy Statement**

Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network (NMWN) is committed to promoting and valuing equality and diversity in all our activities. We welcome and celebrate the diversity of the communities in Nottingham and are strongly committed to achieving equal opportunities and access for all people and groups in society.

Equality & Diversity is the cornerstone of all our policies and procedures. We are proud of the actions we take to eliminate discrimination and prejudice to ensure inclusion and engagement for all the people who work and volunteer with us or wish to use our services. We will continue to strive towards a culture that is diverse and which recognises and develops the potential of all our staff, volunteers and service users.

As a provider of a service to the community, Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network accepts responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

We will actively monitor all activities to ensure that we are serving the needs of all communities and groups.

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that no other committee member, volunteer or service user receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status or gender.

We will encourage our committee, volunteers and the staff of any organisation working with us to take positive steps to ensure that the needs of minority communities and disadvantaged people are met.

We will listen carefully to what people tell us they need from Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network and do everything in our power and within our resources to ensure their needs are met.

We aim to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for everyone. We want to challenge all forms of oppression including those based on race, ethnicity, nationality, creed, gender, sex, class, sexuality, gender reassignment, learning ability, physical impairment, mental illness, HIV status, age, occupation, income, wealth and unrelated criminal conviction. We aim to design our activities, services and decision making processes specifically to encourage and support participation from people who face disadvantage in society, including women, BME people, disabled people, LGBTQ people and people on low incomes.

The Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network Trustees/Committee Members have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all Committee Members/Trustees volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with the organisation to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

Trustees and members of Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network will bring to the attention of all committee members/trustees and volunteers the existence of this policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it. Reference to the policy should be included in the contract documents with outside agencies.

**2. Equality**

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality of opportunity is about everyone being evaluated fairly and being to able to progress purely on the basis of their merit. It encompasses a range of employment legislation that’s been put into place to prevent people being treated unfavourably on the basis of a range of specific factors:

Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Company and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Company to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).

Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Company’s goods and services.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

**2.1 Our Commitment**

* To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
* Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
* Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
* To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
* To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
* To ensure equal access to jobs, volunteer opportunities, membership, services and activities
* To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation currently in force
* To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation
* To create environments free from harassment and discrimination
* To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers and service users
* To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to our work
* To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in the organisation
* To ensure, through positive action and so far, as is practicable, that our premises and services are accessible to all people
* To ensure that employment and advancement within the organisation is determined by objective criteria and personal merit
* We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
* Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

**2.2 Responsibilities of Management**

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Trustees. The manager will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The manager will ensure that:

* all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
* grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
* proper records are maintained.

**2.3 Responsibilities of Staff**

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

* comply with the policy and arrangements;
* not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
* not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
* ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
* inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

**2.4 Third Parties**

Third-party harassment occurs where a Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. The Company will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

**3. Related Policies and Guidelines**

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network policies will be reviewed regularly, and any identified discriminatory elements removed.

**4. Rights of Disabled People**

Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

* make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: the manager is expected to seek advice and guidance from external agencies where appropriate to maintain disabled people in employment);
* include disabled people in training/development programmes;
* give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

**5. Equality Training**

Equality information is included in induction programme.

Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. Any personnel who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive training.

People must not be unfairly discriminated against because of any of the previously documented protected factors and staff and volunteers must all contribute to creating a positive learning and working environment where discriminatory practices and discrimination no longer happen.

Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network (NMWN) recognises that certain individuals and groups are discriminated against and is committed to working towards eliminating all forms of discrimination through its own work and through its employment policies and practices.

**6. Diversity**

Diversity is about respecting and valuing all forms of difference in individuals and positively striving to meet the needs of different people. It goes beyond equal opportunities legislation, encompassing any aspect of an individual that isn’t directly related to their ability to do a specific job or undertake a particular task such as:

* Approach to work
* Values
* Experience
* Family commitments
* Where someone lives

People with different backgrounds and attitudes bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and as a diverse organisation we can draw upon the widest range of experiences so that we can offer the best services possible and be a welcoming place to work.

Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network (NMWN) will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefits to individuals and communities. We will encourage all people we work with, and for, to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution is valued. We will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society and that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

## 7. Equality and Diversity Framework

## 7.1 Expectations

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Trustees. However, we believe that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality.

Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network (NMWN) recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and encourage diversity in employment, training and services. We will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework.

**7.2 Recruitment**

* We will endeavour to recruit staff, Trustees and volunteers from all sections of the community. We will design our committee role or job specifications to allow for as wide as possible a range of transferable experience and qualifications to be taken into account.
* We will ensure that clear job descriptions and person specification information are used to select applicants, with guidance notes on how applicants might meet the criteria laid down in the person specifications, and in relation to the application form. Unnecessary job criteria will be avoided in person specifications when recruiting new employees.
* All applicants will be informed of our commitment to equal opportunities and the recruitment monitoring process that will be followed.
* Job requirements will be those that are really necessary to do the job and not a reflection of traditional practices that may be operating to the disadvantage of minorities, disabled people or younger or older people.
* Application forms will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid.
* No age or age inference will be stated in recruitment advertising or used as a discriminator in recruitment and selection.
* Suitably trained and experienced interviewers will conduct selection interviews. We recognise the importance of ensuring that selection panels reflect the wider community.
* Interviewers will avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory.
* Clear interview notes and records of all applicants will be maintained and kept in a secure and confidential place for a period of six months.

It is vitally important that Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network committee members/staff understand the full diversity of their clientele. As far as it lies within our power, we will ensure that our recruitment processes are designed to ensure equal access for all.

**7.3. Induction and training**

* All new staff, Trustees and volunteers will complete a planned programme of induction, which will include information on our equal opportunities and diversity policy.
* All staff and Trustees will receive training and have the same opportunities for training and development. The selection criteria for training and promotional opportunities will be examined to ensure they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
* We are committed to providing equal opportunities for volunteers to access training and development.
* Equal standards will be operated when undertaking performance reviews and assessments.
* Staff are encouraged to put themselves forward for training and where appropriate, promotion.

**8. Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees as nominated will endeavour to ensure that its composition is as representative as possible.

**9. Publicity and information**

* In publicising our work, including all written publications, we are committed to sensitively representing and portraying the whole community, in a positive manner.
* We will work towards declaring our commitment to equal opportunities in all publications.
* All material produced by or on our behalf will be monitored to ensure that the content is consistent with this framework.
* A commitment is made to develop our publicity and information materials, to ensure they are available and accessible as widely as possible to all groups.

**10. Influencing Others**

Staff are expected to challenge, in an appropriate way, any discrimination they come across in their working practice.

**11. Discrimination and harassment**

* We will Investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment thoroughly, however minor they may appear to be at first sight.
* We will take disciplinary action against any employee or Trustees found to have discriminated against another employee, service user, Trustee or volunteer on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, disability, age, marital or civil partnership.
* Take disciplinary action against any employee found to have harassed another employee on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender / sex, marital status or pregnancy, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender re-assignment or age.

**12. Complaints and Concerns**

Any individual who feels they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly is encouraged to raise their concern through NMWN’s complaints procedure. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.

**13. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or organisational practice. Feedback from staff, volunteers, and service users will inform improvements.

Signed: Marsha Brown

Position: Chair

Reviewed: August 2025

Next review: August 2026