



Defend Yourself

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

*23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2024*

***“Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks”.***

(Charlotte Bronte)

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## **1. Introduction**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, management committee members, users and the general public.

We are aware that it has a responsibility to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to provide and maintain a working environment which is accessible and inclusive for all staff, volunteers, management committee members, service users and the general public.

## **2. Definitions**

For the purpose of this document the following definitions will apply:

- 2.1 Committee Member - a person noted as holding an executive position, or as a member of the Defend Yourself committee.
- 2.2 Staff - a person who is employed by Defend Yourself.
- 2.3 Volunteer - a person noted as offering volunteer hours towards the aims and objectives of Defend Yourself activities.
- 2.3 Member/Service User - participants in activities arranged and conducted by Defend Yourself.

## **3. Summary of Principles**

- 3.1 Defend Yourself is committed to being an equal opportunities organisation that ensures equality of opportunity and fair treatment both as an organisation and as a provider of services.
- 3.2 Defend Yourself will:
  - 1.a. Ensure that all policies and procedures reflect their commitment to equal opportunities;
  - 1.b. Respond constructively to its responsibilities within a charitable/voluntary sector legal framework;
  - 1.c. Integrate equal opportunities into its planning process;
  - 1.d. Create an ethos of fairness, courtesy and respect that embraces all members of Defend Yourself, visitors, service users and the communities which Defend Yourself serves;
  - 1.e. Encourage the committee and any relevant sub-committees within Defend Yourself to review their composition and to consider how they represent and address issues of diversity within the organisation;

- 1.f. Create an environment which is safe, accessible, caring and welcoming;
- 1.g. Work constructively with appropriately recognised organisations, to ensure the effective implementation of this policy;
- 1.h. Ensure that all participants are treated fairly in respect of the nature of the Defend Yourself objectives, regardless of their:
  - h.i. Race
  - h.ii. Colour
  - h.iii. Nationality
  - h.iv. Ethnic or national origins
  - h.v. Sex
  - h.vi. Gender
  - h.vii. Marital status
  - h.viii. Family responsibilities
  - h.ix. Abilities
  - h.x. Physical and mental health (including past history)
  - h.xi. Age
  - h.xii. Sexuality
  - h.xiii. Political or religious beliefs
  - h.xiv. Socio-economic group
  - h.xv. Trade union activity
  - h.xvi. Being an ex-offender<sup>1</sup>
- 1.i. Ensure that all staff and volunteers are included on the basis of their abilities and the requirements of the task and are recruited in a non-discriminatory manner;
- 1.j. Ensure fair treatment for:
  - j.i. All members and service users;
  - j.ii. Everyone who is entitled to use any of Defend Yourself services and facilities;
- 1.k. Develop opportunities in and approaches to, services that take into account patterns of under-representation with a view to encouraging, where possible, greater diversity within Defend Yourself activities;
- 1.l. Monitor and review regularly the operation of this policy.

#### **4. Application of the Equal Opportunities Principles to all Members**

##### **4.1 Policy Operation**

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<sup>1</sup> Certain offences committed will exempt the offender from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

- In choosing the media and wording to be used in advertising and literature, Defend Yourself will be informed by the outcomes of its equal opportunities monitoring;
- Defend Yourself will respond constructively to requests from service users with disabilities and additional needs;
- No service user should be unfairly treated on the grounds listed in section 3 (summary of principles), or on any other unreasonable grounds;
- Defend Yourself will:
  - 1.a. Monitor and keep under review its application procedures and make every reasonable effort to ensure that these reflect best practice;
  - 1.b. Identify and address any barriers in the application process;
  - 1.c. Monitor and keep under review local customs and practices;
  - 1.d. Ensure fairness in the terms and conditions on which services are offered.

#### 4.2 Organisational Culture

- Defend Yourself will make reasonable efforts to provide an environment where the ethos, standards and practices are conducive to the well being of all staff, volunteers, members and service users.

### 5. Application of the Equal Opportunities Principles to Service Users

#### 5.1 Admissions

- No person will be treated less favorably on those grounds listed in section 3 (summary of principles), or any other unreasonable grounds;
- Defend Yourself welcomes applications from people with disabilities or additional needs
- Defend Yourself will:
  - 1.a. Develop marketing and promotion strategies based on a sound understanding of the diverse information needs of service users and the local community;
  - 1.b. Ensure that publicity material, events and information services are relevant and accessible to all applicants;
  - 1.c. Ensure that publicity material, events and information services communicate effectively Defend Yourself commitment to equal opportunities;
  - 1.d. Pay particular attention to language, wording, images, content and format.

### 6. Ethos

- 6.1 Defend Yourself welcomes and values diversity in its staff, volunteers, members and service users;
- 6.2 All members are expected to work in ways that promote equal opportunities;
- 6.3 Defend Yourself seeks to create an atmosphere that is tolerant and respectful of differences and encourages all participants of Defend Yourself to explore and value diversity;
- 6.4 A commitment to equal opportunities is expected of all members of Defend Yourself.

The following legislation and regulations provide the legal framework for Equal Opportunities policy and practice:

### **Relevant Government Legislation**

Equal Pay Act 1970 & (Amendment) Regulations 1983  
Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986  
Race Relations Act 1976  
Race Relations Code of Practice 1984  
Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled People 1990  
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 & (Amendment) Act 1976  
Data Protection Act 1988  
Working Time Regulations 1998  
National Minimum Wage Act 1998  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
Code of Practice (Disability Discrimination) 1996  
Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998  
Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999  
Maternity and Parental Leave etc Regulations 1999  
Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000  
Fixed Term Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2001

The policy and principles described in this document have been approved by Defend Yourself with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

All participants of Defend Yourself have a personal responsibility to comply both with current legislation and with Defend Yourself Equal Opportunities Policy.

On behalf of *Defend Yourself*, we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

**Signed:**

---K.L. Turner----- **Chief Instructor**-----

(NB one of the signatories should be the *Defend Yourself* Equal Opportunities Officer).