



## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES)

### **Statement of Purpose**

NovaCity is committed to meeting the needs and aspirations of customers and communities in a fair, respectful, and proportionate manner. Our approach to diversity and equality is to promote inclusiveness by recognising that anyone, can make a positive difference in the achievement of the organisation's vision and in the wider society.

The policy is linked to our vision, values and business plans. Strategies and action plans will be used to realise and deliver our policy aims. This is our framework of continuous improvement and learning.

This policy should be read in conjunction with NovaCity Discrimination Policy.

### **Our Approach**

- 1.1 The policy applies to everyone the organisation serves, who works for it, applies for work or who provides services to it. Diversity and equality are integral to all aspects of our work.
- 1.2 We will comply with best practice from legal, regulatory and inspection requirements. Codes of Practice and other guidance will be used appropriately to ensure progress on diversity.
- 1.3 NovaCity will not discriminate against, bully or victimise any person or organisation on grounds of, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants or any other protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

### **Principles**

- 2.1 To demonstrate our commitment to diversity and equality, working to eliminating all forms of discrimination whether covered in law or not.

- 2.2 To raise awareness, recognise and celebrate our successes, forming a platform for continuous learning and improvement.
- 2.3 To have a greater and deeper understanding of our customers, enabling them to influence services. Merlin is a comprehensive database that will ensure we provide appropriate professional services and are “being responsive to the individual characteristics and circumstances of residents”.
- 2.4 To have a proportionate number of outcomes and goals for the size of the organisation to ensure all stated outcomes are delivered without exception.
- 2.5 To listen to staff and customers through a range of mechanisms including the Merlin Good Practice Review to assess satisfaction levels across various groups to ensure parity of outcomes.
- 2.6 To have Board members, staff and members that reflect the makeup of the communities we serve.
- 2.7 To work in inclusive ways in developing an organisational culture that proactively promotes diversity and equality.
- 2.8 To ensure the Board, staff and members are supported and trained in knowledge and skills to deliver our policy on diversity and equality.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.1 Anyone representing NovaCity has to abide by all policies and procedures of the organisation. This ranges from employees (including board members), volunteers, contractors, consultants and agency staff. This list is not exhaustive.
- 3.2 The Board’s leadership role will ensure the policy is successful. Staff will have professional, individual and collective responsibility to implement the policy. Contractors, consultants and partner organisations are required to demonstrate their commitment and action to share our policy objectives on diversity.

### **Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

- 4.1 Board and staff appraisals will be linked to this policy and the performance management system in the organisation.

- 4.2 Performance indicators will provide a formal measure of progress and will form part of quarterly Board reports.
- 4.3 The Senior Management Team will monitor progress on this policy, providing a focus internally for staff and externally for customers.
- 4.4 Annual reviews will build on previous performance. The overall impact of the policy will be evaluated at the end of the 2 year cycle to make further continuous improvements.

5. Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy, intended or accidental, is not acceptable. Infringements of this policy will be dealt with seriously as disciplinary matter under NovaCity’s normal disciplinary procedures and may involve either informal or formal action depending on the seriousness of the case.

**Equality and Diversity**

We aim to be an organisation that values, recognises and responds to the diverse needs of members and those we serve. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against any person or other organisation with particular reference to the protected characteristics

**Monitoring and Review**

The Senior Management Team, with adequate consultation of the Board of Trustees, will regularly review the operation of this policy.

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| <b>Agreed by NovaCity</b> |      |
| Signature                 | Date |

## Appendix 1

NovaCity is committed to equal opportunities. It is an integral part of our work and of our overall growth and development. Therefore, before any action is taken, it must be measured against this policy and the equal opportunities implications.

### Membership Policy

- Positive steps should be taken to encourage as wide a membership as possible
- Structures and conditions of membership should be kept to a minimum to make the organisation accessible to minority and grass root groups
- Positive action should be taken to reach out to minority or disadvantaged groups to let them know we want to work with them
- All meetings and training sessions must be held in accessible buildings
- Papers for meetings should be available on tape or in Braille for people with visual handicap
- Non-Sexist language and titles should be used.

### Board of Directors

- Steps should be taken to ensure a wide mix of people on the Board
- People from ethnic minority groups should be encouraged to stand
- People with disabilities should be encouraged to stand
- Meetings must always be held in rooms that are accessible to people with a wide range of handicaps
- All committee papers should be available on tape or in Braille
- Timing of meetings should not exclude certain groups of people from being able to participate
- Obvious gaps in membership should be filled if at all possible by co-option
- All new Board members should be given an Induction Pack
- All new Board members should be offered and encouraged to attend training in Management Committee skills and responsibilities of trustees
- All Board members should be offered Training in Honorary Officer skills.

### Employment Policy

Equal Opportunities method of recruitment and selection shall always be used.

- All members of the Board of Trustees and Senior Staff shall be offered and encouraged to take Equal Opportunities interview training
- All members of selection and interview panels must have undertaken Equal Opportunities training
- All vacancies shall be advertised widely using an appropriate variety of methods and positive action shall be taken to ensure that groups who are under-represented on the staff are aware of the vacancies and that applications from them are welcome
- All job advertised shall state that we are striving to be an Equal Opportunities Organisation and that applications are welcome from all sections of the community
- All vacancies should be looked at to see whether they are suitable for a job share
- Experience obtained from life, voluntary work, childcare and other caring responsibilities should be rated as highly as experience from paid employment
- All interviews must be held in accessible buildings and appropriate assistance at interview given to disabled candidates where required
- Interviewing should be positive. Aiming to find out what people need to enable them to do the job rather than any obstacles that might prevent them
- When purchasing new equipment it should be, whenever possible, capable of being operated by people who are visually, aurally or mobility challenged
- Racial and sexual harassment should be treated as disciplinary offences.

### Volunteers

NovaCity recognises that everyone has the right to be a volunteer but not necessarily the right to do every sort of voluntary work.

- Volunteers working directly for NovaCity should be given a role description and know to whom they are responsible
- Volunteers should have the right to receive training
- Volunteers are not members of staff and should not regard themselves as such
- They should not be given tasks that the staff members do not like doing
- They should not be expected to volunteer outside the hours they have agreed
- Volunteers should never be out of pocket because of their voluntary work and all agreed expenses should be refunded swiftly
- Volunteers should never be used to replace paid staff
- Volunteers must be protected by insurance.

#### Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

So that we can establish whether we are attracting applicants from as wide a section of the population as possible we would appreciate your co-operation in completing this form. Your answers will help us to see where we need to target our advertising for job vacancies.

These forms are received normally in an envelope and are removed from the application form as soon as they arrive at the office and remain completely anonymous. The selection panel will not have sight of them. An example of the form can be found as Appendix 2.

#### **Equality Act 2010**

The Act brought together into one piece of legislation and replaced all previous discrimination legislation. It provides that a person shall not be discriminated against, i.e. treated less favourably, on grounds of nine protected characteristics. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

## Appendix 2 - SEX, ETHNIC AND DISABILITY MONITORING

Applicants are requested to tick the relevant boxes below to enable **Nova City** to monitor its equal opportunity policy. Monitoring is recommended by the codes of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status and disability. This information is used for no other purpose and will be treated as confidential.

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Forenames: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Male  Female

Ethnic Group

White  Black-Caribbean  Black-African

Black – Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi  Chinese

Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you disabled? Yes  No

Day-to-day activity affected \_\_\_\_\_

(please specify)

Mobility

Manual dexterity

Physical co-ordination

Continence

Ability to lift/carry/move everyday objects

Speech/hearing/eyesight

Memory/ability to concentrate, learn or understand

Perception of the risk of physical danger