

Definitions of Discrimination

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional or unintentional. Individuals, groups or whole institutions/organisations can be discriminatory. Perception is as important as intention. It is essential to take seriously the views of people who feel they face discrimination.

Individual discrimination

Is personal attitudes of superiority, for example that disabled people are not as capable as non disabled people, white people believe they are superior to black people, men believe they are better than women. It can also be where someone prejudges another person because of the group with which they are identified or with which they identify themselves.

Group discrimination

Is where prejudicial attitudes and behaviours are shared and reinforced so that there is a culture within the group that encourages discrimination.

Institutional discrimination

Institutional discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate service to people because of their differences including race, gender, caring responsibilities, disability, gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion or belief. It can be seen through processes, attitudes, behaviour and power imbalances that discriminate through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping, which disadvantage these people.

What is racism?

Racism is a general term to describe the conduct, practice and attitude that places people at a disadvantage or advantage because of their skin colour, culture or ethnic origin.

Institutional racism is the failure of an organisation to provide a service to people because of their skin colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in processes, attitudes, behaviour and power imbalances that discriminate through unwitting prejudice, ignorance and thoughtlessness – it leads to the disadvantage of black and minority ethnic people.

What is sex discrimination?

Sexism comes from the belief that one gender is superior to the other. Sexism can be seen in an organisation's power holders, structures, systems and practices.

We know that negative attitudes can lead to sexual harassment and discrimination in access to jobs, training and services. We will strive to combat this through providing equal access to jobs, development and services.

We will take lawful action to ensure any discriminatory barriers are overcome and we will monitor the results of our actions.

What is disability discrimination?

Physical barriers in the environment and attitudes in society lead to disability discrimination. Disabled people are disadvantaged by these factors rather than their impairment.

We will make reasonable adjustments to jobs and working conditions to support disabled people at work and have a redeployment programme for staff who may become disabled to ensure we retain staff whenever possible.

Livewell Southwest has been awarded the Two Ticks Disability symbol which ensures that all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the post are guaranteed an interview.

What is heterosexism and homophobia?

Heterosexism is the belief that heterosexuality is the norm and any other form of sexual orientation is abnormal.

Homophobia is a collection of negative attitudes and prejudices that lead to discrimination against individuals on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

We recognise that discrimination can take place both in service delivery and employment because of a person's sexual orientation. We acknowledge the discrimination that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals face and we will create a climate of respect in the workplace where all staff feel safe to 'come out' if they wish to.

What is religious discrimination?

Making jokes about someone's faith, belittling beliefs or unreasonably promoting your own faith can be offensive. To hold a religious or other belief is a basic human right and should be treated with respect and tolerance.

We will endeavour to promote a culture where people can practice their religion or belief in safety and without fear of harassment and discrimination.

What is discrimination based on gender reassignment?

This is any action that places a transsexual person at a disadvantage by the organisation.

Gender re-assignment is where someone experiences such a deep conflict between their physical sex and their mental gender that they have no choice but to elect to re-assign their gender. This is called Transsexualism.

Livewell Southwest recognises that transsexualism is a genuine medical status. We will provide appropriate support to staff with this status

Transsexual employees will be treated with respect and dignity. We will strive to remove any barriers to employment opportunities.

The Gender Trust at www.gendertrust.org.uk and GIRES (UK) at www.gires.org.uk
Provide education based on research into gender identity and intersex issues.

What is age discrimination?

Assumptions can be made about people because of their age – in particular young people and older people. The assumptions can be that young people lack maturity and that older people lack flexibility and the ability to learn. These attitudes can become built into organisations and shown in their policies and practices – for example advertising jobs for a particular age range only.

We recognise that ageism is harmful because it undervalues the contribution that young and older people make.

We will ensure that there is not age bias in our recruitment advertising, job descriptions, person specifications, promotion opportunities, access to training and development and all Human Resource policies.

The Employers Forum on Age (EFA) is an independent network of leading employers that aim to attract and retain experienced employees, regardless of their age. It highlights, through regular reports, studies and research, knowledge and understanding about the issue of age discrimination at work. <http://www.efa.org.uk>.

Age positive publications including case studies, research and statistics are available from the Department for Works and Pensions at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/age-positive>.