

**Equality and Diversity Policy and
Code of Practice
For Gloucestershire
Local Involvement Network (LINK)**

MISSION

The Gloucestershire LINK will help influence, improve or change the way local Health & Social Care services are planned and delivered

The Gloucestershire LINK is a network of local people, groups and community organisations who want to help shape health and social care services commissioned and provided in Gloucestershire. It is a mechanism for gathering the views of people throughout Gloucestershire communities so that these views can be made known to health and social care commissioners and providers. The Gloucestershire LINK aims to be inclusive and will not discriminate on the grounds of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The Gloucestershire LINK has statutory duties and powers and will act in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Statement of Policy

Gloucestershire LINK wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity whether required by legislation or not, in all aspects of its work. This applies to all Gloucestershire LINK activities.

Gloucestershire LINK will not tolerate any kind of discrimination, harassment or oppressive practices and is committed to promoting anti-discriminative practice in connection with LINK activities.

It is also the individual responsibility of everyone connected with and acting on behalf of Gloucestershire LINK to adhere to this policy.

This policy aims to ensure that all Gloucestershire LINK members:

- Are aware of Equality and Diversity issues
- Put into practice the Gloucestershire LINK policy on Equality and Diversity
- Contribute towards promoting Equality and Diversity
- Avoid unlawful discrimination

Gloucestershire LINK will ensure that all registration applications will be treated fairly and consistently.

The Legal Framework for Equality and Diversity

The aim of the Equality Act 2010 is to ensure people are not treated in a discriminatory or oppressive way. This ultimately will supersede a wide variety of legislation covering equality and diversity (see Appendix).

Code of Practice

The Gloucestershire LINK will take positive action to:

- Challenge, remove or redress discriminatory and oppressive practices and behaviours
- Actively seek to provide genuine equality of opportunity, enabling people from all groups to become members of the Gloucestershire LINK
- Help or encourage those in under-represented and seldom heard groups to be engaged with all its activities

All members of Gloucestershire LINK should:

- Co-operate with measures designed to support or promote the Equality and Diversity Policy and take a pro-active approach to minimizing oppressive practices, behaviour and attitudes specifically in respect of the nine protected characteristics:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- Inform the Gloucestershire LINK Stewardship Board if they have evidence of inequality or discrimination
- Follow the Law and Codes of Practice concerning Equality and Diversity
- Participate fully in any Equality and Diversity training provided for them by Gloucestershire LINK

Responsibilities of Gloucestershire LINK Stewardship Board

- All members of the Stewardship Board should participate in any appropriate Equality and Diversity training
- Take immediate action to investigate and stop any alleged unlawful discrimination within LINK activities
- Ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is conducted on all new LINK policies, policy reviews and plans

Allegations of Discrimination/Harassment against a Member/s

Allegations of discrimination/harassment against a member/s of Gloucestershire LINK will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the Gloucestershire LINK Governance Group and reviewed by the LINK Stewardship Board.

The Stewardship Board may, at their discretion, signpost the issue to an independent external body as appropriate

Appendices

Definitions of Discrimination and Harassment

- Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, on any of the grounds outlined in the policy statement above, than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances. This may be as a result of conscious decision, policy or bias in a system or procedure
- Indirect discrimination occurs where conditions or requirements, although applied equally, favour one group more than any other group, and cannot be justified
- Harassment is behaviour with racial or sexual connotations, which is deliberate, unreciprocated and unwelcome. Harassment extends to interaction between people, which is acceptable to them, but offensive to a third party. Harassment is behaviour of a nature, which is calculated, or likely, to give offence or is directed at that person because of any of the grounds outlined in the policy statement. It includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal threat or abuse, mockery or innuendo, assault, unacceptable touching, displays of offensive material in the workplace or suggestions that any of the grounds listed in the policy statement are a condition of retention of jobs or promotion. In summary, verbal or physical actions related to or motivated by any of the above grounds, which cause discrimination, humiliation, offence or distress, interfere with an individual's work or create an unpleasant or hostile working environment
- Victimisation occurs when a person is given less favourable treatment than others in the same circumstances because it is suspected or known that he/she has brought proceedings under the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, or the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 or given evidence of information relating to such proceedings, or alleged that discrimination has occurred and/or any other legislation that is appropriate

Previous Legislation dealing with Diversity and Equality

This legislation will ultimately be fully superseded by the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent Statutory Instruments:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976 plus Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Part-time Workers Directive 1999
- Employment Equality Sexual Orientations Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality Religion and Beliefs Regulations 2003
- Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Civil Partnerships Act 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality Age Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006 including the establishment of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights