

## **RAN Advice Centre Equality and Diversity Policy**

RAN Advice Centres are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive culture for all those that deliver and use their services. This policy provides the guidance as to how this should be achieved.

In all aspects of their work and management, Advice Centres will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of race, colour, sex, gender identity, disability, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, family status, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, social class, educational background, employment status, working pattern, trade union membership or any other factor.

However it is recognised that the Advice Centres and their services are provided (managed and staffed) entirely on a volunteer basis, there are no paid staff. This situation practically limits some of the support that can be offered. Where a Centre recognises it cannot meet the needs of a volunteer or client, where possible, the person will be signposted to another organisation where their requirements can be met.

Advice Centres are committed to treating all clients and volunteers equally and fairly and to not discriminate unlawfully against them. They will also, wherever possible, take steps to ensure both volunteers and clients are:

- able to provide/access the service in ways that suit them, where possible
- given help that is relevant to their problem and situation
- treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination
- have their needs listened to, and met whenever possible.

Advice Centres recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will endeavour to:

- recruit suitable volunteers from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable
- ensure that selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate
- recognise caring and domestic responsibilities.
- wherever possible ensure that training courses and meetings will be planned to allow attendance by all.
- make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers and enable disabled staff and volunteers to carry out their roles, where possible.
- accommodate requests for time off to celebrate festivals or religious observances.

All staff, managers, volunteers and trustees will be given a copy of this Equality and Diversity Policy as part of their induction.

Volunteers are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and to immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.

Advice Centres will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination made by volunteers, clients or other third parties. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Centre's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.