



## Equal Opportunities Policy

### 1. Definitions

1.1 For the purposes of this document, we use the following definitions:

- (a) Prejudice – a belief, opinion or assumption formed beforehand without sufficient information or from misinformation, resulting in an unfavourable view about a person or group of people;
- (b) Discrimination – Prejudice plus an action (or omission to act). Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another in similar circumstances; indirect discrimination is where an unjustifiable provision, criterion or practice applies equally but where such application disadvantages a particular group;
- (c) Oppression – Discrimination plus power;
- (d) Positive Action – Taking steps to allow an under-represented group, or group which has historically had less access to particular employment/services, to operate on a more level playing field. Positive Action is legal in this country.
- (e) Positive Discrimination – Employing an individual purely on grounds of their membership of a particular group. This is generally unlawful in this country, but note that where a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOP) applies, this is not unlawful;
- (f) Victimisation – Where a person is treated less favourably as a result of their making a complaint or supporting someone who has made or intends to or is suspected of making a complaint of discrimination;
- (g) Harassment – is a form of discrimination and involves unwanted or unwelcome physical or verbal attention of a sexual/racist/homophobic or other discriminatory nature, which is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient, and which creates a hostile or intimidating environment.

1.2 We acknowledge that there are many definitions of these words, some of which are often used inter-changeably. It is hoped that individuals and groups will use these working definitions as a springboard for their own thinking and policy development.

### 2 Why this policy is needed

2.1 JIGSAW recognises that in this society, groups and individuals have been and continue to be oppressed and discriminated against on the grounds of their identity and/or membership of particular groups. Such inequality includes discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, physical or mental impairment, age, class, ethnic or cultural origins, HIV status, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs (or absence thereof), responsibility for dependents, learning difficulty, etc. This is not an exhaustive list. We also recognise that people often face simultaneous or multiple oppression.

2.2 JIGSAW acknowledges that discrimination operates through a number of commonly-held assumptions and prejudices, which are reinforced and upheld by laws, rules and customs, which can result in institutional discrimination in addition to personal prejudice.



2.3 This policy underpins all other policies of JIGSAW and forms part of the contract of employment. Where another policy is in conflict with the Equal Opportunities policy, the Equal Opportunities Policy shall prevail.

### 3. The Legal Framework

3.1 JIGSAW strives to ensure that it complies with its legal obligations under The Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Human Rights Act 1998, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Parental Leave Directive, Equal Treatment Directive 2000, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Employment Rights Act 1996, Gender Recognition Act 2005, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and the Equality Act 2010.

3.2 JIGSAW recognises that legislation is constantly being updated and amended and is therefore not static. We are committed to keeping up-to-date and complying with the same.

3.3 JIGSAW further recognises that existing law does not offer protection to all groups who may experience discrimination. This policy is intended to offer that additional protection in as far as is possible.

3.4 Vicarious Liability – As an employer, JIGSAW understands that it is held responsible for the acts of its employees except where it has taken active steps to prevent this.

### 4. Employment and Training

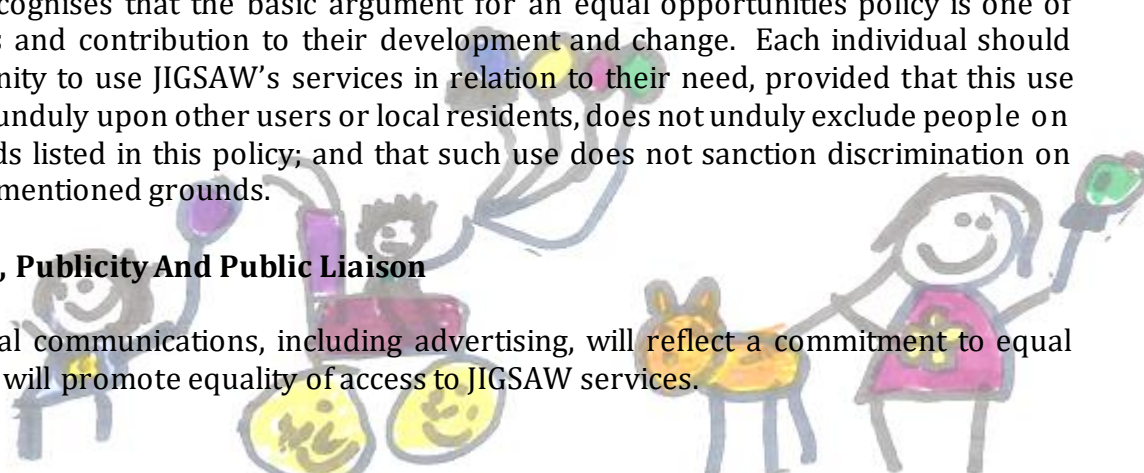
4.1 JIGSAW will not discriminate in its recruitment, training, promotion and other employment practices and will take positive action where necessary, including in the recruitment and retention of executive committee and volunteers.

### 5. Service Delivery and Implementation

5.1 JIGSAW recognises that the basic argument for an equal opportunities policy is one of access to services and contribution to their development and change. Each individual should have the opportunity to use JIGSAW's services in relation to their need, provided that this use does not impinge unduly upon other users or local residents, does not unduly exclude people on any of the grounds listed in this policy; and that such use does not sanction discrimination on any of these aforementioned grounds.

### 6. Marketing, Publicity And Public Liaison

6.1 All external communications, including advertising, will reflect a commitment to equal opportunities and will promote equality of access to JIGSAW services.



## 7. JIGSAW Environment

7.1 JIGSAW aims to ensure that all people will receive a positive welcome from their first point of contact with the organisation and to create and sustain an environment in which people using our services and paid workers and volunteers feel comfortable, free from oppressive attitudes and surroundings, and not exposed to racial or sexual harassment; or to stereotyped attitudes and beliefs.

7.2 JIGSAW aims to create a climate of communication which reflects the aspirations of different linguistic and cultural groups and to facilitate communication between them by the provision of aids to communication and appropriate resources and equipment.

## 8 Responsibility for Implementation

8.1 Overall monitoring responsibility for this policy rests with the directors, but all paid staff and volunteers will take day-to-day responsibility for its implementation.

8.2 JIGSAW believes that passive policies are inadequate and ineffective in combating discrimination and will positively seek to ensure that groups and individuals referred to in this policy are not disadvantaged in the composition of the management committee, in the provision of services, or in recruitment practices.

## 9. Monitoring And Evaluation

9.1 JIGSAW will keep statistical and other information on employment and service use to ensure that our services are anti-discriminatory and are made as accessible as possible to under-represented groups. Such information will be used to inform and develop future planning.

9.2 JIGSAW will review this policy annually and make amendments and set targets as a result.



