



**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**MIDAYE SOMALI DEVELOPMENT NETWORK**

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Signature:

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

- .1. Midaye Somali Development Network (“Midaye”) is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our Trustees, staff, volunteers and service users, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- .2. Midaye is committed to taking positive action to oppose and end unlawful discrimination in every respect of its work.
- .3. Midaye is an equal opportunities employer and will ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, HIV status, AIDS or other chronic medical condition or disability; nor should they be disadvantaged by requirement. Midaye will strive to redress any imbalance that may become evident.
- .4. Midaye’s goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by its values, are embedded in its day-to-day working practices and are upheld by the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and service users.

## **PURPOSE**

- .1. The purpose of this policy is to:
  - .1.1. Encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all activities and services;
  - .1.2. Ensure equal access to services and opportunities;
  - .1.3. Ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation currently in force;
  - .1.4. Promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation;
  - .1.5. Create environments free from harassment and discrimination;
  - .1.6. Maximise the use of resources in the best interests of service users and the general public;
  - .1.7. Confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the organisation’s work;

- .1.8. Ensure there is clear commitment from staff/volunteers and the board of trustees to accept and implement this policy in their work for the organisation;
- .1.9. Ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that the organisation's premises and services are accessible to all people.
- .2. Midaye will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of gender, gender identity, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, age, disability, HIV status, working pattern, caring responsibilities, trade union activity or political beliefs, spent criminal convictions – or any other grounds. (See protected characteristics below covered by the 2010 Equality Act).

## **APPLICATION, AVAILABILITY AND REVIEW**

- .1. This policy applies to:
  - .1.1. Everyone employed directly or indirectly by Midaye, including Trustees, staff and volunteers, irrespective of funding agent.
  - .1.2. All aspects of promotional, educational, and campaigning functions of Midaye.
  - .1.3. All members and affiliate organisations. Midaye would expect its membership to concur with and actively promote these objectives.
- .2. This policy will be made directly available to all staff and volunteers. It will also be made available to other stakeholders and interested parties on request.
- .3. This policy must be reviewed, approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees every two years.

## **LEGISLATION**

- .1. Employment procedures and practices will be undertaken strictly in accordance with the following and all other relevant legislation:
  - .1.1. Race Relations Act 1976
  - .1.2. Sex Discrimination Acts 1975-85
  - .1.3. Equal Pay Act 1970

- .1.4. Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- .1.5. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- .1.6. Equality Act 2010

## DEFINITIONS

.1.	<b>Age</b>	Age refers to a person being of a certain age (such as 65 years old) or belonging to a particular age group (such as 40 - 45 year olds).
.2.	<b>Disability</b>	A disabled person refers to a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
.3.	<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Gender reassignment is the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
.4.	<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	Marriage is defined as a 'union between two partners'. Both heterosexual and same sex couples can get married. Currently, same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'.
.5.	<b>Maternity and Pregnancy</b>	Pregnancy is the condition of expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In a non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth. It includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
.6.	<b>Race</b>	Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.
.7.	<b>Religion or belief</b>	Religion refers to a person's faith. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
.8.	<b>Sex</b>	Sex refers to a person's sex - man or woman
.9.	<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Sexual orientation refers to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

- .1. The Board of Trustees and the management team has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- .2. All staff and volunteers have a duty as part of their involvement with Midaye to ensure that they act in a manner which upholds this policy and work to ensure that it is consistently and effectively implemented.
- .3. Midaye's Board of Trustees and management team will regularly review the implementation of this policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, they shall be responsible for taking remedial action.
- .4. The Director, with the support of the board of trustees, will ensure that management team work consistently to achieve greater equality by keeping the principles of this policy as a key value when:
  - .4.1. reviewing organisation priorities;
  - .4.2. overseeing the delivery of services and the performance of the organisation as a whole;
  - .4.3. developing and producing mechanisms for client consultation;
  - .4.4. establishing guidelines for service monitoring;
  - .4.5. And, managing staff welfare, training and development.

## **DECLARATION OF INTENT**

- .1. Midaye will endeavour to establish a broad base for consultation to identify priorities and needs as reflected by the communities that it serves, ensuring that all aspects of these communities are considered.
- .2. Midaye will monitor and review the composition of its Board of Trustees with the aim of promoting a broad-based representation.
- .3. Midaye will demonstrate its commitment to the principles of this policy by:
  - .3.1. promoting equality of opportunity and diversity within the communities in which it works and with all of its partners, staff and volunteers;
  - .3.2. building an organisation which reflects its customer base and the diverse communities in which it work
  - .3.3. encouraging recruitment from groups currently under-represented in the organisation;

- .3.4. treating its customers, colleagues and partners fairly and with respect;
- .3.5. promoting an environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and tackling behaviour that is not;
- .3.6. recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that people make;
- .3.7. providing support and encouragement to staff/volunteers to develop their careers and increase their contributions to the organisation through the enhancement of their skills and abilities;
- .3.8. building in legislative requirements and best practice to all its service delivery and employee/volunteer policies and procedures, and supporting these with appropriate training and guidance.

## **RECRUITMENT**

- .1. A written job description and person specification shall be prepared in respect of every vacancy that arises and every new post that is created. It shall be checked and agreed by the management team for any indications of direct and/or indirect discrimination, including culture-bound assumptions and ageism before the recruitment procedures commence.
- .2. Applicants will be made aware that general life experience and voluntary as well as paid work experience are valued.
- .3. All jobs must be advertised externally and as widely as is practically possible. In addition to whatever channels the organisation may choose to utilise, the post must also be advertised in a manner accessible to those within the local community. Adverts should clearly state the minimum requirements for the post.
- .4. At both the short-listing and the appointment stage, brief notes shall be made on each application indicating clearly why the applicant has or has not been short-listed or appointed.
- .5. No interview, for any post should be conducted by a panel of fewer than three representatives or more than five members of the management

team, Board of Trustees and staff. All interview panels must include women and shall be suitably representative of the various ethnic groups within the membership of the organisation. Members of staff will be involved at all stages of the selection process in an advisory role. When suitable, an external assessor shall be invited to join the panel in a non-voting capacity.

- .6. An open invitation will be given to short-listed applicants with a disability to discuss their specific needs and requirements. Midaye will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the specific needs of disabled candidates are met.
- .7. During each interview, notes should be taken and at the end of the interview a form should be completed for each candidate, assessing their response to the topics and themes raised. These should be reviewed at the end of the interview process by the panel to see that each candidate has been treated fairly.
- .8. Questions on the following topics are forbidden in an interview. Any candidate who is asked these questions has the right to refuse to answer.
  - .8.1. marital status
  - .8.2. sexual orientation
  - .8.3. occupation of partner
  - .8.4. number of children/domestic arrangements (it should be made clear that the organization aims to be flexible to individual requirements)
- .9. An equal opportunity statement should be included on the application form and job advert.

## **TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

- .1. In order to implement this policy; Midaye accepts that it needs to ensure that all members and staff involved in selection and recruitment within the organisation are given adequate and appropriate training in:
  - .1.1. interview techniques;
  - .1.2. codes of practice;

- .1.3. disciplinary and grievance procedures as contained in Midaye's Complaints, Grievances & Whistleblowing policy and Disciplinary policy.
- .2. New staff should be inducted into the Staff Development and Training Policy and made aware of training opportunities available to them, and be positively encouraged to take them up. All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that staff are able to take study leave.
- .3. All staff and volunteers should have access to support. If a worker feels isolated, provision should be made for support from other parts of Midaye or outside the organisation. If groups of women, Black workers, or gay workers, for example want to set up a support group, this should be encouraged:

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

- .1. Midaye is committed to ensuring equality of access to all its services. The Board of Trustees will take action to provide genuine equality of opportunity to counter past discrimination and to monitor the outcome. The Board of Trustees will aim to ensure that no sector of the community shall be denied access or receive a poor service on the grounds of age, race, gender, disability, being a lesbian or gay man, marital status, ethnicity or religious belief.
- .2. The Board of Trustees will aim to ensure that all its services will be provided in line with this policy. In order to promote equality of access the Board will aim to ensure the following:
  - .2.1. that services are based on consultation with those who receive the services and positive steps are taken to include excluded groups in decision making.
  - .2.2. that all services are flexible and responsive to the changing needs in the community.
  - .2.3. that information on services is widely available and, where necessary, targeted to ensure maximum awareness of provisions.
  - .2.4. that systems are developed to audit and monitor service delivery and consumer satisfaction.



- .2.5. that an accessible complaints procedure will be developed to ensure against discrimination in service allocation and delivery.
- .2.6. that positive action programmes will be developed to target the needs usually excluded groups.
- .2.7. that, in advertising and publicity, Midaye will be presented as an organisation committed to promoting equality of access to employment and services.

## **MONITORING**

- .1. Midaye acknowledges the importance of the collection/analysis of data in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on the services provided will be collected and analysed in relation to equality and diversity matters.
- .2. The Board of Trustees will review the equality of opportunity relating to the organisation's services on an annual basis. Recruitment and selection procedures for volunteers and staff will also be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure that they are upholding the principles of this policy.
- .3. If appropriate, action will be taken to encourage wider take up of volunteering, and community use of its services.
- .4. Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the management committee will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.
- .5. If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging volunteers or restricting service users, the management committee shall take action to re-adjust the policy.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

- .1. It must be made clear to all employees and volunteers that discrimination, abuse or harassment on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexuality - if proven - is a dismissible offence.

- .2. All incidents of direct discrimination will be dealt with in accordance with complaints procedure.
- .3. Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints, Grievances and Whistleblowing Policy and the Disciplinary Policy.
- .4. Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints, Grievances and Whistleblowing Policy and the Disciplinary Policy. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with by the Trustees.
- .5. Any staff member or volunteer, including Trustees, found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from the volunteer register or be dismissed.
- .6. Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on their actions and, where necessary, appropriate action will be taken.

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