

## 7. What Should Be in an Equalities Policy?

An Equalities policy needs to have two parts:

### 1. A policy statement

that sets out the voluntary or community organisation's commitment to promoting equality, including areas that go further than current legislation. The statement should make it clear how the policy was developed and that there is an expectation that staff, volunteers and trustees will all carry a responsibility for implementation. It should also describe the process for accountability and for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy.

### 2. An implementation plan

that clearly sets out:

- How the policy will be implemented
- What is expected of staff and volunteers in all aspects of their work
- What is expected of trustees and member organisations
- How the plan will be monitored and reviewed, by whom and when

### Developing a policy

Ask yourself: Do you already have policies related to specific issues, such as harassment and equal pay? How will these link with this overall policy? Do they need revising or can they be incorporated in some way? Beware of trying to take short cuts and writing a policy in isolation! Any policy must be developed in consultation for it to have any meaning within an organisation. Everyone needs a sense of ownership. This means that the process of development should be transparent and engage the range of interest groups within your organisation.

### Forming a Working Group

An effective way of developing a policy is through a working group. Make sure

- The group is as inclusive as possible
- It reflects the diversity of your organisation
- You have considered inviting representatives from relevant external agencies, such as a local forum for disabled people or the local Race Equality Council
- The group is not too large to be unmanageable
- The group has a clear, negotiated remit and is able to see how its contributions feed into the overall processes and work of the organisation.

### Once you have a policy

Once you have developed a policy that everyone can own and support, you need to be sure that it is implemented and monitored.

Until the policy is fully implemented at all levels in the voluntary or community organisation, it will not mean anything, and its potential will not be realised. You need to plan how you will ensure all policies will be implemented: is it really enough just to send a copy to everybody?

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