



## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### **Overview**

*The Living Room* recognises that in our society groups and individuals have been, and continue to be, discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, marital status, disability, sexuality, age and religious belief. We believe that discrimination on any ground whatsoever is unacceptable. The aim of *The Living Room* is, therefore, to provide genuine equality of opportunity for any volunteer or visitor who may use our service.

### **Visitors**

*The Living Room* is open to all, except that homelessness is a condition for admission, and we should be satisfied that a person's needs are not too great for us to manage safely. We do not discriminate against any guest on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural origins, religion, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or age. If prioritisation is needed due to restrictions on numbers this will be based on need.

*The Living Room* will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision and delivery. All visitors will be treated with dignity. Moreover, we do not accept our visitors encountering any such discrimination whilst in our care, whether from volunteers or other visitors. We will not tolerate discrimination or false allegations.

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect by *The Living Room* team. However, *The Living Room* recognises that not all visitors will treat volunteers in a similar fashion. In a situation where a guest behaves badly or inappropriately, volunteers are asked to be very patient and compassionate whilst ensuring that the appropriate guidelines are followed and personal safety maintained. Any incident should be recorded, and *The Living Room* will deal with any verbal or physical abuse with appropriate measures.

## **Recruitment of Employees**

*The Living Room* will seek to ensure that in recruitment and employment practice there is no discrimination.

## **Support offered in implementing the Equal Opportunities Act**

*The Living Room* recognises the importance of training in assisting employees and volunteers to understand and operate effective equal opportunities practice. *The Living Room* will enable employees and volunteers to meet the needs of all those who might wish to access our service and to develop their own skills and abilities to full advantage. *The Living Room* will also increase awareness to recognise and to deal with oppression, racism or discrimination when observed or experienced.

## **Support in dealing with discrimination**

*The Living Room* will ensure that guests, employees and volunteers have adequate support to deal with discrimination in their work. This includes:

- a. A mechanism for visitors to register complaints where necessary.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly, initially by *The Living Room* Project Coordinator and if necessary by the management committee

- b. A mechanism for employees to register complaints where necessary.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly, initially by the management committee.

- c. A mechanism for volunteers to register complaints where necessary.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly, initially by the Shift leader. If this is not appropriate the complaint will be handled by the Project Co-ordinator and if necessary, by the Management Committee.

## **Monitoring Service Delivery**

The Living Room undertakes to develop systems which audit and monitor service delivery. These systems currently include:

1. Guest Feedback Form
2. Guest Grievance Form
3. Volunteer Feedback Form

4. Volunteer Grievance Form
5. Employee Grievance Form

### **Review of the Equal Opportunities Policy**

A review of the Equal Opportunities Policy and its implementation will be carried out once a year. We will consult with our guests, employees and volunteers on the development of our service on a regular basis.