



Birmingham • Money Advice & Grants

B • MAG

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This policy has been approved by Birmingham Money Advice and Grants based at Dolphin House, 54 Coventry Road, Birmingham, B10 0RX.

Why does B-MAG have a written Equal Opportunities Policy?

We have legal duties of non discrimination arising out of various acts of Parliament.

Birmingham is the city in which we work, and as a city it is multicultural and multifaith.

Our city has people who are disabled.

As a result of our anti-poverty work in Birmingham we come into contact with people who are discriminated against. These include women, single parents, the elderly, young people, ex-offenders, drug users, people from working class backgrounds, other individuals who are treated unfairly because of their choice of dress, their health, their physical size, or people who have made a new home in Birmingham as asylum seekers and those who are active in trade unions.

The B-MAG Equality Commitment

The B-MAG Equal Opportunities Policy is about protecting people, including groups, against discrimination as a result of our employment policy, service delivery and management systems.

B-MAG is proud of the rich diversity that all of the communities and people of Birmingham bring to our daily experiences at home, work and play. This policy is a living document that sets out how we meet our equality objectives and the means by which we review our commitments.

B-MAG will ensure that every member of our organisation, volunteers, managers, staff and trainees are aware of the policy, its aims and objectives, and their own personal role in its implementation.

Our Legal Duties

The Sex Discrimination Act as amended makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex or marital status.

The Equal Pay Act requires that men and women receive equal pay for work of equal value.

The Race Relations Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, or ethnic origin.

The Disabled Persons (Employment) Acts, The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act as amended, and the Disability Discrimination Act provide for protection and equal treatment for people with disabilities.

Note: B-MAG understands that indirect discrimination results, when a condition applied equally to all people and groups nonetheless has an outcome less favourable to one group which cannot be objectively justified.

B-MAG respect the rights of all individuals who are protected by legislation to take legal proceedings if we fail to meet these obligations. Our commitment to equality goes beyond those groups protected by law. B-MAG will give a fair hearing to any complaint made under this policy.

Service Delivery

Publicity

B-MAG is an anti-poverty agency that supports people in financial need. Our public information leaflet attached as appendix 2 describes our services and commitment. The B-MAG website, www.b-mag.org.uk outlines all B-MAG services.

B-MAG will be reviewed annually in light of what we have learned so that we can improve our services.

The B-MAG equality statement will be displayed in our advice venues.

Community Languages

Our services are available to people in several local community languages. We cannot list all the languages available but we do undertake to provide the service in the language of your choice if necessary. If this includes or requires arranging for an interpreter, we will do so.

Access to Premises

Our premises at Dolphin House has access for people with physical disabilities including wheelchair access. For people who cannot physically access our services, home visits will be arranged.

B-MAG endeavours to use training rooms which include a loop system for people with a hearing impairment. We will organise a sign language interpreter if this is necessary.

Meeting User Needs

B-MAG maintains data on the profiles of our service users including equal opportunity monitoring. This data allows us to identify both strengths and weaknesses in our work. The information is used to maintain and improve our commitment to equality. Our leaflet 'Our Standards, Your Rights' is given to all B-MAG clients and explains how we use information provided by clients and the data protection process at B-MAG.

Planning

B-MAG strategic planning includes a process by which volunteers, staff, executive committee and users are consulted in devising a strategy. We review this strategy annually and will follow the same process each year.

Social Policy

At the heart of B-MAG's antipoverty work is our express commitment to the local population that we will oppose social injustice. All policy work and campaigns that B-MAG participates in will be developed on the basis of promoting social justice, in particular for those on low incomes.

Challenging Others Discrimination

Fairness in selection, recruitment and promotion procedures for employed staff, trainees, volunteers and executive committee is essential in ensuring that the rich diversity of our City is reflected in personnel resources at B-MAG.

Before advertising any external vacancy, the job description will be reviewed to ensure that it does not impose unjustifiable or non essential experience or qualifications which may discriminate against certain applicants. The same shall apply to all volunteer recruitment. B-MAG has been accepted by the Employment Service as a two tick symbol disability employer. We will use the job centres disability advisers as one source of recruitment.

Job advertisements and job descriptions will include a B-MAG Equal Opportunities Statement and will actively encourage applications from under represented groups.

All job applicants will be given a monitoring form and statement explaining the purposes of monitoring.

The need to have people from different backgrounds – in particular minority groups, women, and people with disabilities on short listing and interviewing panels will be taken into account when deciding on the composition of all interview panels.

An understanding of, and acceptance of the B-MAG Equal Opportunities Policy will be required for appointment as a volunteer, member of staff or member of B-MAG and is a condition of both appointment and membership of any committee.

Language

We will not use terms that are offensive and patronising to all communities. We recognise that the use of language can change with time. In particular we will only use gender specific terms where appropriate.

Conditions of Service

It is a condition of service that all volunteers, staff, executive committee members, adhere to this Equal Opportunities Policy and failure to do so shall be cause for disciplinary measures to be taken.

We will monitor service conditions to ensure that they do not discriminate, and adequately provide for the needs of our staff, volunteers and executive.

Leave Entitlement

B-MAG recognises that religious observance and extended leave to visit relatives abroad are particular concerns for some groups and therefore:

We will help staff whenever possible to take leave at times other than during recognised public holidays.

We will permit staff wishing to take extended leave to visit relatives abroad wherever possible.

Some people with disabilities may require time for regular treatment. We will accommodate this when necessary.

B-MAG accepts that care of children and other dependants is a shared responsibility and will give equal consideration to both sexes when requests for leave for domestic reasons are made. We will give particular support to carers and lone parents who may need urgent leave to meet the needs of children or other dependants.

Training

B-MAG supports positive action training to overcome the effects of past discrimination, where a group or groups are under-represented within B-MAG.

We will offer, wherever possible, training to existing staff/volunteers and executive members from under represented groups to prepare them for an increasing role within B-MAG as permitted under Section 38 of The Race Relations Act 1976, Section 48 of The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and by The Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Monitoring and Reviewing

This Equal Opportunities Policy will be reviewed annually through the following B-MAG forums;

Staff Meeting
Management Board

The annual review will include the preparing of an equality action plan. If necessary this will be integrated in to the B-MAG strategy. In the following year the equality action plan will be reviewed with reference to what we have learned.

This policy has been approved by all B-MAG forums in April 2004.