



The Severnside Institute for Psychotherapy

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Equal Opportunities Policy: Feb 2016

The Severnside Institute for Psychotherapy (SIP) is a charity supporting its professional members and associates, providing different levels of training, and seeking to maintain high quality psychoanalytic and psychodynamic psychotherapy services to the public across the South West of England. In each of these areas we aim to promote good practice by reflecting on the membership, structure and practices within the organisation; by ensuring that attention to issues of prejudice, discrimination and equality are integrated throughout our trainings; and by promoting good practice by our members in the services they provide to the public.

SIP acknowledges it has both a legal and a moral responsibility to ensure anti-discriminatory practice throughout its work and service provision. We want to find better ways to meet our obligations to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation (In line with the Equality Act 2010).

We believe

- i) that the majority of SIP is white, middle class, female, heterosexual, and able-bodied – we want to broaden this base where we can;
- ii) that oppression, disadvantage and discrimination exist in society in complex ways (direct, indirect, conscious and unconscious) including at an institutional level;
- iii) that individuals and groups can face discrimination on the basis of one or more of the following factors: age, race, ethnic background, religion, belief, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, economic background, social background, disability, health status including mental illness, HIV and other factors;
- iv) that all officers, members, associates, employees, and trainees in SIP need, both to be protected from discrimination and supported to practise and behave in a non-discriminatory way
- v) that the highest level of concern should be given to safeguarding patients and potential patients from discrimination;
- vi) that although we may not always be able to meet specific needs (e.g. the need for an interpreter for ongoing therapy), we will use the principle of ‘reasonable adjustment’ (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) in considering what we can do better.

This EO policy will be circulated to all SIP members, associates, trustees, officers, voluntary lay members of committees, trainees and employees and will be made available to service users through the SIP website. It should be summarised and / or referenced in written information wherever appropriate.

If SIP receives a complaint relating to discrimination or harassment this will be processed without undue delay through the complaints or grievance procedures of SIP or BPC.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee, through its committee structure, with a view to producing a strategy for implementation over the following twelve months. This yearly cycle of implementation, review and strategic development should use measurable objectives wherever possible. SIP encourages all those involved in the organisation to think about what they can do to promote equal opportunities and address discrimination, to make suggestions and proposals to the relevant committees and to the general membership.

The following is a list of examples of how different facets of the organisation may contribute to the development of equal opportunities through the annual cycle.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds the highest level of responsibility for how SIP meets its charitable objectives. This should include annual monitoring of the EO policy and strategy, and of the implementation and review cycle to ensure it is a meaningful exercise. The Board may seek to elect or co-opt members, who have special knowledge in these areas, and to increase the diversity of the Board wherever possible.

Officers and Committee Members

Responsibilities for the day-to-day running of SIP are delegated by the Board to officers and committee members. Individuals should consider the equality and discrimination issues that are relevant to the role they occupy and seek support in developing understanding and good practice. Committees have a key role in the annual implementation and review cycle.

SIP acts as an employer of the Membership and Finance Manager, Training Manager and Administrative Assistant posts, together with members and associates working on temporary teaching contacts. Officers involved in recruitment and setting rates of pay need, in particular, to be aware of the meaning of 'protected characteristics' and of 'unlawful discrimination' under the Equalities Act 2000. Download this leaflet for further details.

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Old_Guidance/PDFS/Employers/1_employers_recruitment.pdf

Members and Practicing Associates

Members and practicing Associates have the employment status of sole traders. This means that the Equality Act applies directly. They will need to be aware of the protected characteristics under the Act as above.

Members should address issues of potential discrimination in their clinical practice. The following are examples of things a member may be expected to do at least once a year to help develop understanding and good practice in their clinical work.

- i) Attend a training event connected to equality issues.
- ii) Read a paper on one of these topics (reading lists are available on the Members and Associates section of the SIP website).
- iii) Join or form a group to read and learn how these issues enter into our work with patients. (SIP currently supports a 'Thinking Space' group based on the Tavistock model.)
- iv) Feedback relevant ideas, experiences and examples to SIP's Equal Opportunities annual cycle via the Executive Committee.
- v) Reflect upon and present in supervision issues related to equality and diversity including the demography of their caseload.

Training and CPD

- i) All training publications including application forms should have equal opportunities statements in the introductory sections.
- ii) Wherever possible, expand the accessibility of the trainings and short courses and support the diversity of trainees (e.g. through bursaries, trainees loan scheme, and by circulating publicity to ethnic minority groups).
- iii) Teaching on race, culture, gender, and sexuality etc. should be integrated across the trainings and not included as an add-on. See BPC bibliographies on 'race', ethnicity, culture and racism and on sexuality and gender.
- iv) Trainings should help make explicit to trainees that theories are never neutral on these matters. (See *Reasons to Worry about the Teaching, Learning, and Use of Clinical Theory* available on the members and associates section of the website.)
- v) Discriminatory views within the profession (for example on homosexuality as pathology) surviving even into recent times should not be concealed from trainees.
- vi) CPD events such as Study Days may play key roles in creating a forum for thinking about these issues.
- vii) Data should be routinely but sensitively collected to quantify and monitor the diversity of all SIP courses. These figures should form part of the annual report cycle.
- viii) Feedback from trainees on diversity issues during and after training should be sought.

Employees

Contracts – including temporary teaching contracts – should include knowledge of the current SIP Equal Opportunities policy within the list of roles and responsibilities. Relevant training opportunities should be made available.

ACAS offers guidance on the delivering equality and diversity in the workplace, and on the implementation of the Equality Act.

[http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/l/e/Acas_Delivering_Equality_and_Diversity_\(Nov_11\)-accessible-version-Apr-2012.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/l/e/Acas_Delivering_Equality_and_Diversity_(Nov_11)-accessible-version-Apr-2012.pdf)

Informed by these guidelines we seek to develop good practice in relation to our employees in the following areas:

- i. Recruitment and selection
- ii. Training and development
- iii. Access to grievance procedures
- iv. Equal pay
- v. Anti-bullying and harassment
- vi. Adapting working practices with regard to disability
- vii. Flexible working

Patients and potential patients

Affordability

It is a regrettable fact that psychoanalytic and psychodynamic therapy is often beyond the reach of those with low incomes or on state benefits. There is no comprehensive solution to this but members and associates should bear in mind that SIP supports initiatives which attempt to extend the availability of low-cost therapy.

- Most members re-negotiate fees if a patient's income is unavoidably reduced.
- Some members have a proportion of low-fee sessions.
- Many members contribute to the subsidised treatment and training fund. (Contact the General Administrator for further information.)
- Some SIP trainees seeking to enhance their clinical experience offer low cost sessions.
- Our relationship with the Lark Trust (owners of 11 Orchard Street) and ACPS allows a proportion of the surplus from the rental income to be distributed between the two leasing organisations to support training and therapy for those on low income.

- Members work in a number of organisations which provide therapy at low or no cost (The Harbour, Womankind, the Bridge Foundation, ACPS and others).

Other accessibility issues

- SIP will maintain a register of all members who work in – or can use – consulting rooms which have disabled access.
- A list will also be maintained of members able and willing to work in languages other than English, or who have experience of working with interpreters

Other members of the public

- We recognise that the acceptability of therapy is itself culturally restricted. Public education events which address these issues (for examples, racism and cross-cultural therapy) can do much to change the public image of an organisation.
- When considering venues for public meetings, thought should be given to physical accessibility, and access to appropriate sound technology.

Policy approved at SIP Executive Committee, 5.2.16.