



YORKSHIRE SOUND WOMEN NETWORK C.I.C.

Equality & Diversity Policy

Statement of Intent:

Yorkshire Sound Women Network (YSWN) recognises that many people are discriminated against and will take positive action against discrimination in our areas of concern. We aim to ensure that no job applicant, staff member, volunteer, or organisation or individual to whom we provide services will be discriminated against by us on the grounds of: race, colour, gender, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, marital status, caring responsibilities, age, physical disability, learning difficulty, mental ill health, religion, lack of formal qualifications, class, employment status, unrelated criminal conviction.

The purpose of this statement is to state YSWN's commitment to prevent discrimination in its service provision and employment practices, and to take active steps to stimulate genuine equality of opportunity.

Actions:

YSWN will take action to ensure that group activities and events are open and welcoming to everybody entitled to attend.

1. All YSWN Associates (Paid & Voluntary) and Directors will be required to read the Equality & Diversity Policy and Safer Spaces Policy and will undertake to comply with and implement these policies.
2. We aim to make our meetings and events accessible to people with disabilities – e.g. provide transport where possible, meet in accessible premises, produce information in large print, etc. Where carers/interpreters/key workers are male and the women-only nature of a workshop or event would therefore be compromised, the Working Group/Directors will consider on a case by case basis.
3. We aim to use local training opportunities to help our committee and members better understand how discrimination occurs and how to prevent it.
4. We aim to hold meetings and events at a range of times and in a range of locations to facilitate attendance by all members, e.g. those with caring responsibilities or limited mobility.
5. We will create an action plan of recommended practical and proactive steps to help ensure that this policy is applied across all organisational practices.

Harassment:

Harassment includes but is not limited to threats, verbal abuse, use of derogatory language, invasion of personal space, inappropriate touching, sexual propositions, and over-familiarity. YSWN events are educational events and as such conversation should be kept professional and polite.

Any instances of harassment will be treated in accordance with the guidelines set out in the YSWN Safer Spaces Policy.

Complaints:

Members who have experienced discrimination or harassment at one of our events, or have been the victim of any other practice which violates this policy, can report the incident immediately to the Affiliate Group representative, YSWN Voluntary/Paid Associate or Director present at the event. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint immediately, it will be referred to the YSWN Directors for further action. Where a member feels more able to report an incident after an event, they may make the complaint to the Working Group/Directors using contact details on the YSWN website.

YSWN is committed to learning and improving, and to changing our practices to ensure this policy is upheld and applied across all areas of practice. Any person who feels that this policy has not been upheld can make a statement to that effect or register a complaint. This will be dealt with by the YSWN Directors who will investigate the matter, listening to all individuals involved. We recognise that Equality & Diversity policies can often become mere lip service and we aim to work hard to prevent this happening within our organisation. As such YSWN will support people who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, and will not victimise or stigmatise them because they have raised a complaint. We are strongly committed to being a fair, inclusive and accessible organisation.

Safer Spaces Policy

The Yorkshire Sound Women Network (YSWN) aims to create friendly and safe spaces at all of its meetings and events. We wholeheartedly believe that no attendee should have to tolerate behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

It is not realistic to assume that we can prevent anything bad from happening in our group. Truly inclusive spaces are only achieved through ongoing dialogue to which all members are invited to contribute. We recognise that often things that make people feel excluded or threatened are very subtle in nature, which is why we aim to take seriously any issue that is brought to our attention.

Detailed below are the types of behaviour that we don't tolerate and the reaction that can be expected from us should these situations occur. We hope that it will be possible to resolve issues in a mutually supportive manner without the need for strong sanctions or the banning of disruptive individuals. However, we are fully committed to keeping our events friendly and safe; as such if there are attendees who are unable or unwilling to comply with this policy then they will be asked to leave.

Prejudiced behaviour

Definition

Prejudiced behaviour is any action motivated by prejudice; this includes but is not limited to sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism, sizeism, ageism, etc.

Immediate action

Prejudiced behaviour is often subtle in nature and will therefore usually need to be reported in order for the Directors to be aware of its presence. A YSWN Director will speak to the perpetrator about the behaviour, entering into the conversation in a spirit of compassionate instruction as safer spaces can offer a unique opportunity for learning and reflection. The perpetrator will be provided with the Safer Spaces Policy and behaviour will be monitored throughout the rest of the event.

Follow up action

With regard to the victim: A follow-up conversation will be initiated with the victim to ensure that they are satisfied with the way the incident was handled. If they have any criticisms, these will be used to help inform future actions and to influence the development of this policy. With regards to the perpetrator: If the perpetrator's behaviour improves and is acceptable for the remainder of the event, no follow up action will be taken. The perpetrator will be welcome at other events, provided this policy is adhered to.

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Definition

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Immediate action

Like prejudiced behaviour, harassment is often subtle in nature and will therefore usually need to be reported in order for an Associate or Director to be aware of its presence. An Associate or Director will speak to the perpetrator about the behaviour and ask them to

refrain from harassing other attendees. The perpetrator will be provided with the Safer Spaces Statement and behaviour will be monitored throughout the rest of the event.

Follow up action

The Directors will decide what action is to be taken dependent on the severity of the incident. Unlike with prejudiced behaviour, which can be the result of ignorance, harassment is often carried out with intention and therefore may require a more uncompromising response. With regard to the victim: The victim will be informed of the Directors' decision on follow up action and their feedback will be solicited to ensure that they are satisfied with the way the incident was handled. If they have any criticisms, these will be used to help inform future actions and to influence the development of this policy.

Physical Violence

Definition

Any behaviour that physically intimidates or injures other people.

Immediate action

In the case of physical violence the perpetrator will be asked to leave the premises immediately and the police will be informed.

Follow up action

Follow-up communication will be entered into only if the Directors decide it is safe to do so.

Review:

These policies will be reviewed annually.

Date last reviewed: 19 June 2018