

## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

*“Violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of unequal power relations between women and men.”*

### **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)**

*“From violence in the family, to rape and murder, women and girls face deep seated and systematic discrimination. Violence against women is literally the most common human rights abuse in the world; a scar on humanity’s efforts to bring about an equitable world with equal rights for all its citizens. The time for action, for real, profound change is long overdue. Women simply because they are women, can no longer be denied their fundamental rights and freedoms.”*

### **Jennifer Campbell, Campaigns Manager, Stop Violence against Women, Amnesty International UK**

*“Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace.”*

### **Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary General**

*“Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms... In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture.”*

### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, paragraph 112**

**nia**, established in 1975 formerly as Hackney Women’s Aid, is a feminist, charitable organisation providing a range of support, advisory and advocacy services to women and their children who have experienced violence against women and children. The organisation has consistently valued diversity and strived to strengthen its commitment to challenge discrimination and promote equality in recruitment, employment and service delivery through policy and practice.

# POLICY

## 1. Purpose

**nia** is committed to providing high quality and comprehensive support to all women and children who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles underpinning **nia's** Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure that no women or children receive a less favourable service or employment because of inequality and/or discrimination.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1** **nia** is proud to deliver services to the rich, diverse community groups of the Greater London Area. However, we recognise that diversity and difference are not always celebrated but often seen as problematic, and that individuals or members of specific groups are targeted with discriminatory and oppressive behaviours or practices.
- 2.2** **nia** aims to ensure that as both a service provider and employer, it adopts a positive action, best practice approach, incorporating equalities issues into day-to-day working.
- 2.3** **nia** takes a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and will target and eradicate intolerance and discriminatory behaviour or oppressive practices in service delivery and employment management.
- 2.4** **nia** provides services to women who have experienced domestic and sexual violence, including :
- Women involved in prostitution
  - Women who are homeless as a result of violence against women
  - Black women and women from minority ethnic groups
  - Women with no recourse to public funds
  - Women on low incomes and/or dependant on welfare benefits
  - Lesbians and women in same-sex relationships
  - Trans women
  - Older women
  - Women students
  - Disabled women
  - Women with mental or physical health support needs
  - Women with substance use issues
  - Women offenders and women in prison

By simply being a woman and by belonging to one or more of these groups, women

are more likely to experience discrimination and disadvantage when approaching individuals and services for help or employment. The barriers encountered in their attempts to access support further compound women and children's experience of violence and abuse.

- 2.5** **nia's** policies are informed and guided by legislation and regulations including the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Act 2002, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Human Rights Act 1998 the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Gender Recognition Act and the Gender Duty.

### **3. Equality in Service Delivery**

**nia** recognises that discrimination can affect every area of a woman's life including access to money, housing, the law, education, training, employment, transport, rights to care for children, rights to remain in the country and the right to be believed and not judged when abuse is disclosed. All women receiving **nia** services will receive an equal service, which will take into consideration race, age, ability, (mental and physical) sexuality, nationality, faith and cultural beliefs.

#### **We aim to:**

- Challenge all incidents of discriminatory and oppressive behaviour or practice to promote equality in service delivery
- Ensure that all service areas are made available to and accessible by all women and children approaching the organisation (unless the service is targeted at specific groups)
- Offer support, advice and advocacy to women and children that are relevant, tailored and appropriate to the specific needs of the individual
- Ensure regular consultation with women and children service users to review service delivery and organisational practices.

### **4. Equality in Employment and Management**

**nia** aims to recruit the best possible women to provide, manage and administer our services. We seek to ensure that the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers reflect the range of skills and experience required. We believe that our service benefits from diversity, and that this allows the contribution of the broadest possible range of ideas and experiences.

#### **We aim to:**

- Develop policies to challenge all incidents of discriminatory and oppressive behaviour or practice to promote equality in recruitment and employment
- Create an organisation which promotes equalities principles and reflects and embraces workforce diversity

- Support and encourage employees to maximise their full potential as members of a valued and effective team
- Deliver regular, structured in-house equalities and diversity training to raise awareness and promote individual and team responsibility on equalities issues
- Ensure regular consultation with employees, volunteers and trustees to review work practices and feed in to **nia's** Strategic Plan.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

- The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that this policy is regularly reviewed
- The Chief Executive is responsible for the implementation of this policy
- The Heads of Operations and Central Services Coordinator are responsible for ensuring employees are inducted into the policy and that they receive regular training.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that the work of their teams takes full account of equality and diversity issues
- All members of staff, volunteers and member so the Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that their conduct and work upholds the principles of the Equality and Diversity policy.

# PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

This policy is underpinned by a commitment to enhanced equalities practice through:

## 1. Accountability

- **nia** takes responsibility and ownership at all levels in the organisation
- Each service area will show how it addresses equalities within its day-to-day working. This includes establishing mechanisms to ensure a strong focus on equalities issues, and ensuring equalities issues are woven into the fabric of the service delivery
- Develop close working links with relevant Equalities Forums

## 2. Maintaining Standards

- If a woman or child service user feels that **nia** has failed to maintain the standards set out in **nia**'s statement, they will be actively encouraged to pursue a complaint against the organisation by using **nia**'s Complaints Procedure
- If an employee, volunteer or trustee feels that **nia** has failed to maintain the standards set out in the statement, they will be actively encouraged to pursue a grievance with the organisation by invoking **nia**'s Grievance Procedure

**nia** will

- Ensure quality, clarity and consistency in service delivery through regular supervision, team meetings, case work meetings and case panel meetings
- Review, monitor and evaluate the aims and objectives of service areas to ensure relevance and service priority compliance
- Develop measurable equalities performance indicators in service areas.
- Maintain the Advice Quality Standard (or alternative, appropriate accreditation) for quality service delivery through on-going assessment and monitoring.

## 3. Building Trust and Confidence

**nia** will

- Ensure clearly defined, visible and strong leadership and management
- Ensure on-going mentoring for managers in the areas of management, supervision, appraisal and conflict management
- Ensure on-going training programmes for trustees in the area of the duties and responsibilities of Board membership.

## 4. Effective Partnership Approach

**nia** will enhance its partnership work with local, national and international community

groups, voluntary and statutory sector agencies and local government. This includes:

- Partnership working with community and voluntary agencies and projects providing services to equalities groups
- Working with community-led equalities groups
- Active membership of, and participation in, relevant community, voluntary and statutory equalities committees, panels and forums
- Active participation in consultation exercises with local and central government on matters relating to equalities in order to influence policy initiatives
- Consultation with equalities groups to explore how best to represent and address their specific needs, and develop strategies and actions to meet their needs and combat discrimination.

## **5. Monitoring and Review**

- Information received from service users from a range of feedback mechanisms, including complaints and exit questionnaires. This will be used to make improvements in service provision.
- Research into the needs of equalities groups and their views on limitations and obstacles to accessing services.
- The composition of service users, staff, volunteers, applicants for employment and the Board of Trustees will be monitored annually. Staff will be monitored as a whole and also split into direct service providers, research/development staff, managers and central administration/finance/core workers. Applicants for employment will be monitored at application, short listing and employment offer stages. Service users and referrals will be monitored as a whole and also split into departments and where required by funders by borough or access to specific projects. Diversity data will be compared to the targets set in Appendix 1 and examined by the senior management team. Separate targets will be set for the Board of Trustees because the limited size of the group prevents full representation.
- Where targets are not met, strategies to address under and over representation will be developed. An annual report giving details of monitoring and action taken or planned to address under and over representation, will be presented to the Board of Trustees.

## APPENDIX 1 - MONITORING

### Race and Ethnicity

**nia** will set diversity targets on representation of women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups based on the most recent census data available for London, see below.

**nia** recognises that BME groups are over represented in people from poorer economic backgrounds and are therefore more likely to require services. **nia** will seek to ensure that representation from does not fall below the average for London. Given the size of the organisation, the diversity of London's population and **nia's** commitment to challenging inequality and discrimination, means that there is likely to be an under-representation of staff of white British origin compared to the average population in London. **nia** believes that this will facilitate the delivery of a more equitable and informed service.

The target for BME representation on the Board of Trustees will be two members, or thirty per cent of the Board, whichever figure is highest.

### London Population by Ethnic Group (based on figures from 2011 census and rounded)

Ethnic Group	Percentage
White	60
Mixed	5
Asian	18
Black	13
Other	4
	100

### Sexuality

According to the London Development Agency and Stonewall, at least five per cent of London residents are lesbians or gay.

**nia** will therefore set the following targets for lesbians and bisexual women:

- Employees - not less than 5%
- Service users – not less than 5%
- Board of Trustees – 10 per cent or 1 member, whichever figure is highest

**nia** recognises that lesbians face discrimination in access to employment and services. As an organisation with a commitment to challenging inequality and discrimination, **nia** will view any representation above five per cent as a positive outcome. **nia** believes that this will facilitate the delivery of a more equitable and informed service.

## Disability

According to Disabled Living Foundation approximately 20% of women aged 20-59 are registered as disabled.

The Labour Force Survey breaks down three categories of disability:

- Disability Discrimination Act and work limiting disability -62%
- DDA disability only – 20%Work limiting disability only – 18%

Therefore approximately 2 per cent of women aged between 20 and 59 have a DDA recognised disability which should not affect their ability to work.

**nia** will therefore set the following targets for disability:

- Employees – 2%
- Service users – not less than 20%
- Board of Trustees – 10 per cent or 1 member

	Target for representation	Staff	Service Users
DDA registered		2%	Not less than 20%

**nia** recognises that disabled people face discrimination in access to employment and services. As an organisation with a commitment to challenging inequality and discrimination, **nia** will view any representation above these targets as a positive outcome.

## Age

**nia** will set diversity targets on representation of women from the range of age groups based on the data available for London from The National Statistics Office, see below.

**nia Age Group Targets for employment and service use:**

	Target for representation	Staff	Service Users
18-29		32%	32%
30-44		38%	38%
45-59		24%	24%
60-64		6%	6%