Equal Opportunities Policy for BrainWaves Research Charity

1. Introduction

BrainWaves Research recognise that our strength lies in the diversity of our people, and we are dedicated to creating an inclusive and equitable environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their best work. This Equal Opportunities Policy outlines our commitment to preventing discrimination and promoting fairness in all aspects of our operations, in line with the **Equality Act 2010**.

2. Policy Statement

BrainWaves Research is an equal opportunities employer and charity. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the grounds of any of the nine 'Protected Characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- **Age:** We value the experience and skills of individuals of all ages.
- **Disability:** We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure that our workplace and services are accessible to all.
- **Gender Reassignment:** We respect and support individuals who are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** We do not discriminate against individuals based on their marital or civil partnership status.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** We provide a supportive environment for pregnant employees and those on maternity leave.
- **Race:** This includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin. We celebrate the diversity of our team and will not tolerate discrimination on these grounds.
- **Religion or Belief:** We respect and accommodate the religious and philosophical beliefs of our staff, volunteers, and service users.
- **Sex:** We are committed to achieving gender equality in our workplace.
- **Sexual Orientation:** We are an inclusive organisation that respects and supports individuals of all sexual orientations.

This policy also extends to protecting individuals from discrimination by association (e.g., because of a family member's or friend's protected characteristic) and discrimination by perception (e.g., because you are perceived to have a protected characteristic).

This policy applies to all individuals associated with BrainWaves Research, including employees, job applicants, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and service users.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of our work, including but not limited to:

- **Recruitment and Selection:** We will use fair and objective criteria to select the most suitable candidates for roles, ensuring that all applicants are treated equally, regardless of their background. We will not ask health-related questions before making a job offer, unless they are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work.
- **Training and Development:** We will provide equal access to training and development opportunities to help all employees and volunteers reach their full potential.
- **Pay and Benefits:** We will ensure that our pay and benefits are fair and non-discriminatory, based on an individual's role, responsibilities, and performance.
- **Promotion and Career Progression:** We will provide equal opportunities for promotion and career advancement based on merit and performance.
- **Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures:** We will ensure that our disciplinary and grievance procedures are fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory.
- **Volunteering Opportunities:** We will provide equal opportunities for individuals from all backgrounds to volunteer with our charity.
- **Service Delivery:** We will ensure that our services are accessible and non-discriminatory, meeting the needs of all members of the community we serve.

4. Responsibilities

- **Trustees:** The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- **Senior Management:** Senior managers are responsible for promoting a culture of equality and diversity within their teams and ensuring that all staff are aware of and comply with this policy. They are also responsible for taking all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and victimisation.
- **Employees and Volunteers:** All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to treat their colleagues, clients, and the public with dignity and respect. They must not engage in any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- **Individuals:** Anyone who believes they have been a victim of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation has the right to raise a complaint under our grievance procedure.

5. Dealing with Discrimination

BrainWaves Research will take all complaints of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation seriously. Any individual found to have violated this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or termination of their volunteering role. In cases of unlawful discrimination, we acknowledge our potential liability as an employer for the actions of our staff and will act to address such conduct appropriately.

6. Monitoring and Review

We will regularly monitor our recruitment, retention, and promotion data to identify any potential trends or barriers to equality. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and compliant with all relevant UK legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.

7. Implementation and Communication

This policy will be communicated to all new and existing employees, volunteers, and trustees. It will be available on our internal drive to ensure easy access. We will also provide training on equality and diversity to all staff and volunteers to raise awareness and promote best practice.

Date Approved: August 2025

Next Review Date: May 2026