



Mary Ward Settlement

Equality and Diversity Policy

Document status

Status	Approved (at IB meeting 27.10.20)
Version	2.0
Last reviewed	September 2020
Owner	Warden
Review period	Every 2 years

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Mary Ward Settlement (MWS) works to ensure equality of opportunity in all areas of its business.

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the principles of applicable equality legislation, and with specific regard to the outcomes stated in Chapter 2, Principle 9 of the SRA Handbook.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all stakeholders of the MWS, including staff, volunteers, students, clients and any authorized third party.

3 Statement of intent

MWS aims to be a centre of excellence in education, in legal advice and in community services, working across London to provide quality education, eliminate prejudice and promote social justice. Equality of opportunity is therefore at the heart of the Settlement's practice and policy. We value diversity within our paid and volunteer workforce.

We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality and diversity within our policies, practices and procedures, and to the provision of our services to disadvantaged people of all backgrounds. This applies to our professional dealings with students, clients, all staff (including all volunteers), other legal service providers, experts and third parties.

We do not discriminate unlawfully, or victimise or harass anyone in the course of our professional dealings.

We provide our services to students, clients and members in a way that is designed to respect diversity.

We make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled stakeholders (including students, clients, members, staff, volunteers and others that we deal with) are not placed at substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled, and where additional costs are incurred in order to do so, we do not pass on those costs to the subject of the disability.

We ensure that our approach to recruitment and employment encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity.

We aim to ensure that complaints of discrimination are dealt with promptly, openly and effectively.

We have arrangements in place to monitor, report and, where appropriate, publish workforce diversity data.

Consequently, we treat everyone equally and with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of:

- age
- disability

- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy, maternity or paternity
- other caring responsibilities
- race, religion or belief
- sex or sexual orientation
- any other defining characteristic

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, as a service provider and employer, we do not unlawfully discriminate under the terms of any legislation in force relating to discrimination in employment and provision of goods, facilities or services.

4 Policy implementation and review

The Warden is responsible for implementing and monitoring our Equality & Diversity policy. She undertakes a review of this policy every three years (more regularly if any non-compliance or problem concerning equality and diversity issues with clients or personnel) and ensures that appropriate action is taken in relation to any non-compliance under this policy or barriers to equal opportunities.

5 Recruitment, selection and progression of staff

This section of the policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the applicable MWS policies, including the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

We ensure that we always treat job applicants fairly by operating an open and fair recruitment process. Recruitment, selection and later progression are always measured against defined selection criteria for the role, which does not discriminate. Applicants are objectively assessed and it is recognised that apart from job related qualifications and experience, other knowledge and experience may prove equally important in the appointment or progression of staff.

We treat all employees equally and create a working environment which is free from discrimination. This applies equally to voluntary positions and anyone undertaking work experience with us. In addition to arrangements for recruitment and selection, this includes terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, dress code, work allocation and any other employment related activities. Promotion within MWS is made solely on merit.

6 Service to students, clients & members

As a provider of publicly funded education and other services we treat all students, clients and members equally and fairly and do not unlawfully discriminate against them. The Settlement is committed to meeting the diverse needs of users within the resources and funding constraints we face. Wherever possible we will take steps to promote equal opportunity in relation to access to the services we provide, taking account of diversity of the communities that we serve, in order to ensure our services are accessible to all clients.

Where resources allow we will take steps to identify the needs of all users in our community and develop services to meet those needs. We will make use of outreach

work to strengthen our links with the community and respond to their needs in accessing the most appropriate services.

Where resources allow we will take to ensure our services are accessible to those with a disability and where possible meet the language needs of our clients.

7 Suppliers and third parties

Suppliers and third parties are expected to have values which are consistent with those of the Settlement and demonstrate active compliance with equalities legislation. Any selection decision should be on merit, taking into account equal opportunity principles.

8 Procedures for reasonable adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students, clients, members and employees are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled, and we do not pass on the costs of these adjustments to these disabled service users. Staff discuss individual needs with students and clients with a disability to ensure reasonable adjustments are made. When considering whether to make a reasonable adjustment for a user, we have a duty to give careful thought as to whether the disabled user will be at a 'substantial disadvantage', which is defined as 'more than minor or trivial' in the Equality Act 2010 S.212(1) if the adjustment is not made. Some of the points we would consider when deciding whether the adjustment is reasonable or not include:

- The cost of the adjustment in relation to the overall value of the service (the cost of the adjustment would need to be significant to justify not making the adjustment on cost grounds alone).
- The extent of any disruption or loss of service as a result.
- Whether it is possible to deliver the service in another way without any reduction in the quality of client care offered.
- The size, resources and ability of the Settlement to manage the reasonable adjustment.

We would seek legal advice before refusing a request to make a reasonable adjustment.

9 Training of personnel on compliance with policy

All staff are informed of this policy as part of their recruitment and induction. All staff are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of this policy and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their jobs or representing the Settlement.

Equality and diversity is incorporated into our service standards and we will challenge any unacceptable behaviour towards staff, volunteers or other service users.

We will identify equality and diversity training needs as and when appropriate. We communicate this Equality and Diversity policy and provide guidance to staff and Trustees on compliance with Equality & Diversity requirements.

10 Complaints and disciplinary issues in breach of this policy

We treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination made by students, clients, members, staff, volunteers, members of our Board of Trustees, experts or other third parties and take action where appropriate. All complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, openly and effectively. We investigate them in accordance with our grievance or complaints procedure and the complainant is informed of the outcome.

Acts of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation are disciplinary offences within the Settlement. Where acts of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation are identified, we will ensure that our Disciplinary Procedure is followed.

11 Monitoring and recording

We monitor the number and outcome of complaints of discrimination. We also monitor and record the number of job applicants from different gender, disability and ethnic groups at least annually.