



## HEALTH POVERTY ACTION

### Disability Inclusion Strategy

#### 1 Disability Inclusion at Health Poverty Action

##### Definition of Disability

Disability encompasses a range of physical, cognitive, sensory, or mental health conditions that have a substantial or long-term negative effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal daily activities. Disabilities can be both visible and invisible. A disability is not inherently tied to these conditions; it can also result from society's failure to meet the needs of people with certain impairments. Consequently, the term 'disabled people', or 'person with a disability' refers to individuals who are disabled by societal barriers.

##### Ability Diversity

Ability diversity refers to the varying abilities and disabilities individuals possess. Differences in cognitive, social-emotional, and physical abilities add to the layers of ability diversity. This concept recognises that we all have different abilities, and none is inherently "better" or "worse" than another. Embracing ability diversity is central to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment.

##### 1.1 Health Poverty Action's statement of values begins:

***"Equity** is the key to all our work. Health care is a fundamental human right which should be universally available to all according to need. Health Poverty Action recognises that there are limitations to the extent to which all needs can be met, but we affirm our commitment to the principles of universality and of inclusion of the most vulnerable and to ensuring **disability inclusion** in the operation and outcomes of our work."*

##### 1.2 These values underpin not only our international health programmes, but the internal governance and management of the organisation.

##### 1.3 Health Poverty Action is committed to creating an inclusive and diverse working environment by challenging all forms of discrimination and prejudice; and promoting equal opportunities, access, and participation for all individuals. We are taking steps with the aim of eliminating unfair disadvantage by providing reasonable accommodation for any staff member, intern, volunteer, job applicant or Board member with a disability in all aspects of our work.

##### 1.4 The implementation of this policy will sometimes require collaboration between and among Health Poverty Action, government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to achieve lasting results. Reasonable accommodations will also extend to individuals from these organisations we collaborate with.

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#### 2 Disability inclusion in relation to Health Poverty Action's workforce

##### 2.1 In employing staff, and in engaging consultants and volunteers, we aim to attract a diverse workforce in order to foster an ability diverse culture. This will only be achieved if disability inclusion is integral to all our activities and a broad range of people are involved in Health Poverty Action's work in the UK and internationally.

- 2.2 We aim to ensure that all people, regardless of disability, who work in Health Poverty Action are valued for their contribution and are given the opportunity and support to realise their full potential possible within the organisation.
- 2.3 The aims of Health Poverty Action's disability inclusion strategy are:
- (a) to ensure that job applicants, employees, consultants, volunteers or trustees
    - do not suffer unlawful discrimination or receive less favourable treatment because of disability.
    - are not disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable and are treated on the basis of their relevant abilities and merits.
  - (b) so far as the law allows, to encourage positive action to promote disability inclusion. Including reasonable accommodations.
  - (c) to ensure that it is procedure to give people with disabilities, or those with health conditions support and equal opportunities in recruitment, training, promotion and career development.
- 2.3.1 There are variations between the detail of terms and conditions for staff working in different countries, but these will be within the framework of Health Poverty Action's values and principles adapted to local contexts, rather than a radical departure from them.

### **3 Disability inclusion in relation to Health Poverty Action's programme work**

- 3.1 Persons with disabilities are often denied equal access to education, health services, employment opportunities etc, because of their disability. Physical access is still a widespread problem especially in developing nations denying access of persons with disabilities to health, educational and other service providing institutions.
- 3.2 Including people with disability in project and programme from design, through implementation and evaluation. This process follows the principles:
- (a) Respect for inherent dignity; individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, independence of persons.
  - (b) Non-discrimination; and
  - (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society.
- 3.3 The importance and significance of disability inclusion is ensuring equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities. The aims of Health Poverty Action's disability inclusion strategy are to:
- (a) Promote the principles of non-discrimination, accessibility, participation, and equality in relation to disability rights.
  - (b) Recognise the diverse needs and experiences of persons with disabilities and the importance of accommodating their specific requirements.

## **4 Implementation**

### **4.1 Recruitment and selection**

- 4.1.1 Recruitment and selection of staff, volunteers and consultants is carried out in accordance with *good equal opportunities practice, as outlined in the Recruitment Procedures set out in Health Poverty Action's Managers' Handbook*. Health Poverty Action will consider, seek and use the most effective ways of recruiting suitably qualified applicants from disadvantaged and under-represented groups, such as people with disabilities. Before advertising any posts, Health Poverty Action will consider whether the advertisement should encourage applications

from specific under-represented groups and how to provide reasonable accommodations throughout the application and interview process for those who should need it, such as applicants with disabilities.

- 4.1.2 Procedures set out in the Managers' Handbook enable those responsible for the recruitment and promotion of staff or the operation of disciplinary or grievance procedures to act in a manner which minimises the risk of discrimination.
- 4.1.3 Board of Trustees: Health Poverty Action recognises that individual members of disadvantaged groups, such as those with disabilities, are particularly under-represented at the highest levels of decision-making in society. Therefore, we aim to ensure that our Board of Trustees maintains a healthy degree of diversity, including ability diversity, through appropriate advertising and selection methods.
- 4.1.4 Job applicants themselves are expected to demonstrate a commitment to disability inclusion and an understanding of how to implement principles of ability diversity in relation to the post for which they are applying.

#### 4.2 Projects and programmes

##### 4.2.1 Programme Development

- Integrate a gender and disability analysis into programme design and implementation of all HPA programmes and projects.
- Require potential local partners and stakeholders to have disability inclusion policy and guidelines.
- Encourage and demand the representation and meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities in programme development and decision-making processes.
- Ensure that disability perspectives are integrated into the programme's objectives, activities, indicators, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

##### 4.2.2 Capacity Building

- Nurture a culture of equity, diversity, respect and inclusion by providing the staff with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to address disability-related issues.
- Continually raise awareness among staff members about ability diversity through webinars, internal meetings, and training workshops.
- Promote disability-inclusive approaches within the country programme's policies, guidelines, practices, and procedures.

##### 4.2.3 Advocacy and Influencing

- Collaborate with local partners to identify and address barriers to disability inclusion.
- Involve in research collaborations that aim to unveil the barriers to access social services and rights and lived experiences of marginalised groups including persons with disabilities as inputs to evidence-based policy and programmes advocacy.
- Engage with stakeholders – communities, community leaders, local organisations, government ministries, and donors, to advocate for disability rights.
- Collaborate with and support local organisations focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities for policy and programmes advocacy.

- 4.2.4 Ensure new project proposals allocate budgetary resources to implement the approaches and strategies detailed in this guideline effectively.

#### 4.3 Responsibilities of employees

- 4.3.1 All employees have a contractual obligation to apply the Disability Inclusion strategy positively in all aspects of their work.
- 4.3.2 Any proven instance of discrimination or harassment will be treated as a disciplinary offence, which may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including summary dismissal.
- 4.3.3 Where employees consider they have been subject to discrimination or harassment, they should follow the steps set out in the Grievance Procedure.

#### 4.4 Staff training and development

- 4.4.1 Health Poverty Action has a Staff Development Policy which covers activities which:
- enable staff to continuously improve their performance in achieving the organisation's goals;
  - enhance their opportunity for personal and professional satisfaction and growth within their work.

This applies to all staff, regardless of disability.

- 4.4.2 Work plans and budgets will include processes and resources for identifying people's development needs and supporting these needs.

4.5 Monitoring and recording

As part of its monitoring of performance in the area of Disability Inclusion, Health Poverty Action might on occasions store information that is considered sensitive data under the Data Protection Act 1998, or personal under GDPR. Where this is the case, staff are informed through the Privacy Notice.