Equality and Diversity Policy
Appendix B - As it Relates to Employees

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as agency Employees, contractors and others employed under a contract of service.

Everyone at SSC has a personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of all employee induction, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with.

This policy is also of particular relevance to Directors, Line Managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. SSC will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, agency Employees, contractor, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic:

- → sex / gender;
- → gender reassignment;
- → sexual orientation;
- → race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
- → disability;
- → religion and or belief;
- → age;
- → pregnancy and maternity;
- → marriage and civil partnership

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities in SSC. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter through SSC's Whistleblowing Policy or Complaints Procedure.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. SSC will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by SSC as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under SSC Disciplinary, Dismissals and Appeals Policy.

A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under SSC's Disciplinary, Dismissals and Appeals Policy.

Employees may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

When does this policy Apply?

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions) or which may impact on SSC's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to SSC).

We set out below some specific areas of application:

Recruitment
Selection for employment at SSC will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Further detail is set out in SSC's Staffing Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy. Where possible, SSC will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of its recruitment processes to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

Training
You may also be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.

Promotion
All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit, and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.

During Employment
The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to SSC employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups

In Conclusion

Stepping Stones Care is committed to achieving equal opportunities in everything that we do. To meet these aims we will:

- → Treat everyone equally irrespective of their protected characteristics
- → Not tolerate harassment/intimidation and respond to all reports of this kind
- → Combat prejudice and stereotyping
- → Encourage all individuals to apply for employment without discrimination
- → Ensure all employees, Young People, partners and others will be made aware of our commitment to equality.
- → All discriminatory remarks, attitudes and behaviours are not acceptable and will be actively challenged and reported in line with procedure.
- → All employees are given the skills to identify, manage and challenge and discriminatory remarks.
- → All employees will be expected to apply the principles of this policy in their day-to-day work and activities.
- → All managers have a responsibility to ensure that the promotion of equality becomes an integral part of everyday work and have a duty to identify Employee development for them and their Employees.

Stepping Stones Care will treat very seriously any breach of this Policy by its Employees, Young People or visitors. The complaints procedure will be offered to the relevant individuals, or the disciplinary procedure instigated if relating to Employees. Both Employees and Young People are reminded that they have a duty to report any suspected incident or harassment perpetrated. In order to achieve this level of care, the culture must be one where Young People are valued equally and without prejudice.