



Diversity, Inclusion and Equality

Policy and Procedure

Approval date: June 2016	Next review: June 2018
Approval authority: Quality Committee	Key Author: Quality Officer
Version number: 1	

1. PURPOSE

Multiple Sclerosis Limited (MS) recognises the value in supporting an inclusive working environment, providing equality and fairness in all MS functions, including employment and the provision of services. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure MS workplaces and practices are reflective of its strong belief that embracing diversity promotes acceptance, good health and safety
- Promote a fair and inclusive workplace culture free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of disability, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion, family responsibilities, socio-economic background, life and work experience and sexuality that encompasses the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community(LGBTI) by setting out relevant employee obligations
- Support MS in delivering minority focus best practices for minorities as well as enhancing our ability to meet the needs and expectations of all MS team members

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all MS team members, recipients of MS services and their families and friends.

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

MS is required to comply with a wide variety of legislation which is detailed within the Acts and Standards Policy and Procedure.

4. POLICY

MS's diversity principles incorporate all aspects of human resource management, such as workforce planning, recruitment and selection, performance management, learning and development, leadership development, workplace health and safety and workplace relations.

The concept of workplace diversity retains the principles of equal employment opportunity (EEO). EEO addresses continued disadvantage such as bullying and discrimination experienced by particular groups of people in the workplace.

The people of Australia come from a wide range of backgrounds. MS creates an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where traditions and histories of different groups are valued and appreciated. MS acknowledges and respects the traditional owners of the land – Indigenous Australians.

Our core principles are to:

- Treat everyone uniquely, ensuring individual needs are met
- Create a welcoming, ability friendly, confidential and culturally appropriate environment
- Ensure all MS team members are skilled in inclusive practice and service delivery
- Keep the workplace free of inappropriate conduct that detracts from principles of diversity and equality, including discrimination (including indirect discrimination) and harassment (including bullying, victimisation and vilification)
- Holistically acknowledge and respect a person's individual needs, unique history, life experiences and personal choices
- Ensure MS risk management systems include strategies to identify and manage potential risks to the cultural safety to all diversities, cultures and people

Employees are expected to respect local culture etiquette, protocol and communication techniques to ensure that their conduct, as a representative of MS, is appropriate and culturally sensitive.

5. PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE		Responsibility
1	Leadership for ensuring diversity and inclusion of minority groups	
1.1	To ensure there is organisational support for the inclusion for all people who access MS services and workplaces, MS will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group which reports directly to the Quality Committee • Have all improvement actions addressing diversity and inclusion for minority groups registered on the MS Continuous Improvement Register and complete external reporting on these as required • Acknowledge “Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country” for all formal events 	CEO and Executive team
2	Taking a systemic approach to identifying specific needs	
2.1	MS provides strategies based on a deep understanding of need prompted by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming feedback and providing mechanisms for this to occur anonymously • Undertaking regular evaluations/surveys • Promptly dealing with any complaints or observations of harassment or bullying in the workplace 	Team Leaders
2.2	Access to services incorporate cultural needs or wishes.	
3	Communicating in an inclusive way with our customers	
3.1	MS provide printed and spoken information on the website in relevant community languages.	Communications team
3.2	MS use electronic/social media avenues to reach our people who may be socially and physically isolated individuals. E.g. links to peer support groups.	
3.3	MS actively works with website consultants to design communications in a way which meets the diverse needs of our community and in particular the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colours chosen are suitable for vision impaired • Easy access navigation for vision impaired people • Audio access is available for hearing impaired 	
4	Building relationships and acceptance	
4.1	MS focusses on building relationships both internally and externally and raising awareness with our stakeholders to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of the commitment to acceptance and reconciliation by and within our organisation. This is demonstrated by providing a welcoming environment and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating special events significant to individuals • Displaying Indigenous Australian flags • Celebrating diversity in our services we deliver • Recognising and accepting a proportion of MS employees and clients identify and have a connection with different minority groups. 	MS team members
5	Providing services which optimise inclusion and diversity	
5.1	MS can provide information for accessing an interpreter service MS will create its forms so they can be readable to the vision impaired. MS strives to create an environment that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe • Creates a sense of independence and ability friendly • Respects each person’s rights and responsibilities • Supportive towards people in a culturally sensitive manner 	MS team members
5.2	Well-being access audit is regularly conducted and action plans developed to redress any physical access and signage issues.	
6	Providing training to ensure the workforce has the necessary skills	
6.1	Diversity Inclusion and Equality policy information is included in the orientation program and training calendar.	HR

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Forms (all forms to be reviewed at same time as policy review undertaken)	Location
Code of Conduct	Intranet
MS Continuous Improvement Register	Intranet
Advocacy Policy	Intranet
Racial Discrimination Act 1975	https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/legislation
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986	
Sex Discrimination Act 1984	
Interpreter Fact Sheet	Intranet

7. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Staff Group	Level of knowledge required	Training source
CEO	Awareness of the Policy	Independent learning
Executive	Awareness of the Policy	Independent learning
Managers	Detailed understanding	1:1 with Operations Manager
Front-line workforce	Detailed understanding	1:1 with Manager
Volunteers	N/A	N/A

8. COMPLIANCE MEASUREMENT

Measure	Target	Frequency	Tool	Responsibility
Diversity and Inclusion Working group have completed CI items in past 12 months.	Yes	Annual, in line with Charter review	Charter checklist	Operations Manager
Diversity and Inclusion training has occurred for targeted workforce groups in the past 12 months	Yes	Annual	MS Business Systems Audit Tool	Human Resources

9. KEY SEARCH WORDS – Cultural, Religion, Sexuality, Discrimination, Rights, Disability.