



OR0013 SHEP's Inclusion Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Our policy on inclusion is informed by our commitment to **equality legislation** and equality principles set out in our equality statement.

SHEP strives to be **inclusive of all** people who seek to participate in our programmes or use our services.

SHEP will be **proactive** in reaching out to groups and individuals who experience marginalisation in Irish society - to support their inclusion in SHEP courses and services.

Our aim is to have **diversity** among participants in courses/training groups. In certain circumstances it will be appropriate to organise dedicated courses for specific groups of people. Our aim is to support participants in such groups to progress to mainstream courses in SHEP or elsewhere if that is their wish.

Our intention is to be supportive and inclusive. However, not all applicants may be offered a place if SHEP staff discern that an applicant is not **ready to participate** in the course in question. When an applicant is not considered ready to participate we give honest and supportive feedback (in person) and we support them by offering them a more appropriate course or service in SHEP and/or signposting the person to other services.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Resources

SHEP will ring-fence funding on an annual basis to provide necessary supports to people who wish to access SHEP courses and services and who are experiencing economic barriers to participation.

SHEP will also ring-fence funding on an annual basis to provide necessary supports to people who wish to access SHEP courses and services and who are experiencing barriers to participation such as disability and marginalisation.

Applications

We will deal directly with all applicants.

When a person makes an enquiry on behalf of another person, with sensitivity to the need for support, we will advise him/her that the course coordinator needs to speak directly to the applicant.

All application forms will include the question: Are there any additional supports you need to participate in this course?’

It is the responsibility of the Course Coordinator to meet with the applicant if there are any issues or concerns regarding the applicant’s readiness to participate.

Readiness to Participate

The five criteria we use to make decisions about the readiness of individuals to participate and to continue to participate in a SHEP course are:

- Willingness and capacity to engage in a group.
- Willingness and capacity to begin to reflect on experience.
- Willingness and capacity to explore ideas.
- Sufficient wellness to participate in a group
- Sufficient ability to communicate in English

Course Place Offers

An applicant will not be offered a place if SHEP staff discern that the applicant is not ready to participate in the course in question.

Course Facilitators

All course facilitators will read the application forms of participants offered places (or will be informed of any salient information by the relevant staff member.)

At the discretion of the Course Coordinator, any relevant information about applicants will be shared, in confidence, with the Course Facilitator(s) before the course commences.

The course facilitator(s) will communicate directly with the Course Coordinator if there are any concerns around readiness/capacity to participate.

Requesting a participant to leave a course

In the interest of the individual or the group, a participant may be asked by SHEP to leave the course. Due care and attention is taken in making such decisions. Our intention is to be supportive. Where appropriate, we refer to the Projects' Problem Resolution Policy.

Approved: June 2019

Reviewed & Renewed: October 2025