



Name of Policy: Human Rights and Non-Discrimination

Revised Policy Adoption Date: *SLSC Annual General Meeting, Ottawa, ON, June 17, 2017.*

Historical Policy Adoption Date: *SLSC Annual General Meeting, London, ON, May 23, 2009.*

Mission and Mandate: St. Leonard's Society of Canada is a membership-based, charitable organization dedicated to community safety. The mission of SLSC is to promote a humane and informed justice policy and responsible leadership to foster safe communities. It:

- a. Endorses evidence-based approaches to criminal and social justice;
- b. Conducts research and develops policy;
- c. Supports its member affiliates; and
- d. Advances collaborative relationships and communication among individuals and organizations dedicated to social justice.

Purpose of SLSC Policies: Policies of SLSC are developed in collaboration with affiliate agencies, SLSC's Board of Directors and members, and are ratified at the Annual General Meeting with the express purposes of:

- Identifying criminal justice and related issues relevant to its membership;
- Reflecting SLSC organizational values and social justice goals;
- Articulating SLSC approaches, practices and standards to achieve these goals; and
- Ensuring the good governance of SLSC on matters of legal, administrative and organizational relevance.

Background:

Human rights initiatives and policy can have a significant impact on how SLSC develops and implements its work at the national level and through its affiliates. They can be a driving force in ensuring the safety, respect and dignity of all those who engage with SLSC and its affiliate agencies.

Issues/Scope:

As both an ideological approach and as a pragmatic tool, SLSC seeks to promote the development and application of human rights policies in day to day interaction for those who come in contact with SLSC and its affiliates, including clients, family, employees and volunteers. It is our belief that the promotion of human rights will contribute positively to SLSC's mission and long-term goals. Using rights-based considerations in corrections allows the community to be a place of inclusiveness where the rights of the client and the rights of the public are considered in tandem with one another. This appreciation of rights allows for the increased development of an inclusive strategy that promotes safer communities.

For the purpose of setting policy on human rights and non-discrimination, the *Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA)*,¹ the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*,² and applicable legislation from provinces

¹ *Canadian Human Rights Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. H-6. Available <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/page-1.html#docCont>

² *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Constitution Act, 1982. Available <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>

and territories are the source material and foundational documents used to ensure appropriate promotion of fundamental rights. Within this framework, the principles of equality, mutual respect and a condemnation of discrimination are articulated. By defining human rights broadly, SLSC's policy may be applied to all people who come into contact with us and our affiliates.

SLSC's Human Rights and Non-Discrimination Policy strives to be as inclusive as possible. In addition to the legislation listed above, SLSC also draws from the *Ontario Human Rights Code*,³ which offers additional breadth in the application of who is protected under the legislation. SLSC aims to embody the best of available legislation to ensure that our policy is comprehensive.

The human rights policy developed by SLSC adopts a proactive approach to human rights and encourages the implementation of human rights policies for all of its affiliates. This proactive approach promotes the advancement of human rights in two ways:

- a. First, the human rights policy must be accessible to all those to whom the policy applies and all participants must also be aware of and have access to a complaint system if these rights are not being met.⁴
- b. Second, SLSC promotes the development of protocols if discrimination is found to have taken place. This accountability is paramount to the promotion and effectiveness of human rights policy.

SLSC and its affiliates assert that the development of human rights policy specific to each agency will benefit the clients, families, volunteers and employees so that their role can be carried out in a safe, effective, and dignified manner.

St. Leonard's Society of Canada affirms the purpose of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* which reads:

...the principle that all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

Moreover, SLSC embraces the *Ontario Human Rights Code* that states additional protected grounds such as: ancestry, citizenship, place of origin, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance (in housing only), record of offences (in employment only) and sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding).

The Society endorses an expanded definition to include a call for SLSC and its affiliates to be proactive in the establishment and application of a human rights code through the following resolutions:

Resolutions:

Be it resolved that St. Leonard's Society of Canada will:

³ *Ontario Human Rights Code*, 1962. Available <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

⁴ Correctional Service Canada. (2013). Human Rights and Corrections: A Strategic Model. Retrieved from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/rights/wgroup/cce-04-eng.shtml>

1. Promote correctional practices which maintain and enhance the human rights of the clients.
2. Support the development of human rights policies by affiliate agencies in order to protect the human rights of their clients, families, employees, and volunteers.
3. Regard the access to information about the human rights policy as essential so that all parties may be aware of their rights and how they are applied.

Additional information

SLSC Reports/Publications:

- [SLSC Presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights](#). (2017).