

The Diversity Trust CIC

EQUALITIES POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Diversity Trust CIC (The Trust) recognises that everyone has an equal right of access to its goods and services.

The Trust will adhere to the legislative framework complying with the Equality Act 2010 (See Annex 1.1 and 1.2), the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality and Human Rights Commission Codes of Practice (See Annex 1.3) ; we will ensure our practices adhere to the principles of all relevant equality legislation and pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty actively working to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups of people and the communities we work with

The way we work is not only governed by the legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality, but also wholly encompasses the core values of the organisation. The Trust delivers services in a way that recognises the importance of inclusion, bringing opportunities and access for all individuals.

We are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, ensuring accessibility and respecting human rights. Our mission is: to influence social change to create a fairer and safer society.

The Trust will:

1. Take pro-active steps to address discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in all of its forms in employment practices and service delivery.
2. Ensure that everyone directly associated with our organisation – staff, service users, clients, associates, contractors and visitors are aware of our commitment in these areas and how this policy affects them.
3. Identify, and take positive and practical steps, to remove any barriers to the participation of people who are currently under-represented as staff, service users or associates.
4. Seek to develop and maintain a workforce that reflects the community within which we serve.

5. Ensure that there are clear procedures to ensure compliance with relevant legal requirements (e.g. recruitment) and that staff, volunteers and associates are offered training to put these procedures into practice.
6. Ensure that the accessibility of our buildings, services and information is routinely reviewed and improved, where possible.
7. Ensure that staff receive appropriate support, training and advice to assist them to deal sensitively with challenging equalities issues.
8. Develop internal working arrangements and structures that will assist in the promotion of anti-discriminatory practices, and the sharing of effective practice to this end.
9. Enable staff, associates and contractors to have equal access to relevant training and opportunities for development and ensure that terms, conditions and employment practices do not discriminate against any group.
10. Ensure that managers establish and maintain suitable systems to ensure that we can effectively monitor and evaluate compliance and progress in relation to promoting equality of opportunity.

The Trust is committed to equal opportunities. We recognise and embrace our responsibility to promote equality of opportunity for staff, service users and others associated with the organisation. This means that we, our associates, and our contracted services, will ensure that none of our paid employees, volunteers, service users or organisations to whom we provide services is unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic' including: age, disability (including: mental health and those with hidden disabilities), gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race (including: colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief (including: political belief and those with no religion or belief), sex and sexual orientation. In addition, we will not discriminate on the grounds of: social standing, status, responsibility for dependents, social class, employment status or unrelated criminal convictions.

The Trust is an anti-discriminatory organisation committed to influencing social change, the promotion of equal opportunity and the elimination all forms of discrimination and harassment covered by the Equality Act 2010 (See Annex 1.1 and 1.2) including:

- Direct Discrimination
- In-Direct Discrimination
- Discrimination by Perception
- Discrimination by Association
- Victimisation
- Harassment

We recognise the various types of discrimination related to protected characteristics and what prevents individuals and groups gaining equal access to societies resources and services. We are committed to taking practical steps to address inequality and discrimination by complying with relevant legislation and developing best practice.

It is our policy to redress the balance, as far as is lawful, in favour of all under-represented and disadvantaged groups, including: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We recognise that “positive action”, to meet the needs of specific groups facing discrimination, can make a practical contribution to addressing discrimination and inequalities.

We define “positive action” within the context of the Equality Act 2010: Positive action enables an employer, or an organisation, to increase participation from a wider section of society through opportunities such as training and mentoring schemes. Examples of positive action could include: training and mentoring schemes for under-represented groups.

The Trust commits itself to taking positive action to ensure that its activities and provision of services, its recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers and its recruitment of Board members are within the spirit and letter of current legislation and our Equalities Policy.

ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES

The Trust recognises the need to ensure that all individuals can gain access to its services and contribute to their development. The Trust primarily aims to increase its membership and extend its services amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups who face discrimination and inequalities.

In order to achieve this:

- The Trust will seek to develop and implement anti-discriminatory strategies and positive action programmes as part of its work and promote these throughout all the spheres of influence available.
- The Trust will take appropriate steps to ensure it provides a broad and balanced range of services which take into account the varying needs of different individuals and groups. We will also take action to identify the needs of people who are under-represented in our work and will strive to plan services to meet those needs.
- All staff, associates, volunteers and Directors must be aware of our commitment to equal opportunities and should be familiar with the contents of this policy document.
- Particular support will be provided for disabled groups and individuals through the provision of ‘reasonable adjustments’ (See Annex 1.4). We aim to ensure that our services are accessible to people with disabilities by taking services outside the building to appropriate venues.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Trust aims to ensure that all people will receive a positive welcome from their first point of contact with the organisation.

We aim to create and sustain a working environment free from oppressive attitudes and surroundings in which people using our services, staff, associates, and volunteers, feel

comfortable and are not exposed to any form of harassment (including racial or sexual harassment) or to stereotyped attitudes and beliefs.

BREACHES OF POLICY

All staff, service users and volunteers have a right to make a complaint if they consider this policy has been breached. Complaints should be made under the procedures set out in the Grievance and Complaints Policy and Harassment and Bullying Policy. Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously, investigated and addressed through the established disciplinary and grievance, and complaints policies and procedures.

Staff, volunteers, associates, contractors, clients, customers and service users have the right to make a complaint if they consider that this policy has been breached.

Disciplinary action will be taken, as appropriate, where allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation are founded.

PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC LIAISON

The Trust will provide information and resource materials which are free from images, language or attitudes which are: ageist, disablist, heterosexist, racist, sexist or Transphobic.

All external communications, including publicity materials, press releases and advertisements will reflect a commitment to equal opportunities and will promote equality of access to the organisations services.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION

The composition of the Board of Directors should reflect the diversity and needs of the people who use the services of the organisation and who experience discrimination and inequalities.

In order to achieve this:

- The Trust will carry out a regular analysis of the composition of the Board of Directors to identify which communities are under-represented.
- The Directors will endeavour to take appropriate action to recruit new members to ensure equal representation in the group's decision-making processes.

Recruitment, Employment, Promotion and Development

The Trust will ensure all of its recruitment and selection practices are in accordance with principles of fairness and equality of opportunity, and fully in compliance with all relevant legislation.

We aim to recruit staff and volunteers via a process consistent with our Equalities Policy. By setting targets, and monitoring of the recruitment process and the workforce, we will seek to remedy any significant under-representation and to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination.

Decisions taken throughout the recruitment process will be recorded in a standard format and this information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the process in ensuring

equality of opportunity. Where appropriate, we will also utilise positive action to encourage diversity and to seek to address any significant under-representation.

We will ensure that training, promotion and development opportunities are offered on a basis that can be shown to be non-discriminatory.

We appreciate the skills and value that staff and volunteers with caring responsibilities and dependents bring to the organisation, and we are committed to enabling those staff to work within the organisation. Where this is possible, and consistent with the provision of a high quality service, we will take a flexible and sympathetic approach to the issues faced by these staff. We have policies on maternity, paternity, adoption, parental and compassionate leave.

Serious consideration will be given to staff who wish to take Annual Leave on specific days for religious or cultural reasons or who need to make adjustments to their working week for similar reasons. Reasonable adjustment or leave will not be unreasonably refused.

The Trust may choose to make a special effort to encourage workers from under-represented groups to take up posts or at certain levels within the organisation. This may include offering customised training and select development opportunities to staff from these groups.

We will collate and monitor statistical information about our workforce to allow consideration of the profile of the workforce in terms of protected characteristics with the purposes of ensuring that marginalised groups are represented and the workforce properly reflects the makeup of the wider community within which we operate. This information will be reported regularly to the Board of Directors.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Board of Directors will have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy and for the development of any further equal opportunities initiatives.

This will involve the collection and analysis of statistical information concerning job applicants, Director composition and service users, in order to inform future service planning.

We will seek to obtain equality and diversity information from staff and candidates for the purpose of monitoring and reporting purposes. This will be requested on a voluntary basis, via an employment data monitoring form, and will be used to assess how diverse the organisation is and to ensure we are meeting our equality and diversity responsibilities as set out in this policy and in our constitutional objectives.

We will take corrective action where any issues are identified. Equality and diversity information gathered may also be used to support the process of tendering for new business.

Progress against the priorities detailed in the Equality Development Plan will also be used as a measure of how well this policy is being delivered.

The Trust will ensure that its Directors, paid staff, associates, contractors and volunteers are committed to ensuring that the Equalities Policy is implemented.

Responsibility and Communication

The Trust expects that all staff (employees, volunteers, associates, contractors and temporary workers), and service users, play an active part in promoting this policy. The Chair is responsible, on behalf of the Board of Directors, for communicating and promoting the policy. Each member of staff, with support from their manager, has responsibility for implementing this policy within their area.

The Board of Directors are responsible for monitoring compliance with this Equalities Policy and the associated procedures. The Board are responsible for challenging any areas where under performance has been identified.

Procedural responsibilities under the Equalities Policy are as follows:

The Board:

- Are responsible for ensuring The Trust meets its responsibilities and legal obligations in relation to equality legislation.
- With assistance from the manager will ensure equality commitments identified in the policy are delivered through the development of an Equality Development Plan (EDP) / Action Plan.
- Will monitor and scrutinise performance, taking responsibility to set improvement targets where a need has been identified.
- Will identify and secure sufficient resources to implement this policy.

Managers / Directors:

- Are responsible for working with The Board to ensure that the EDP / Action Plans are developed and the activities in the Action Plans are implemented.
- Will provide a high-profile lead on activities contained in the Action Plans.
- Will be the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead with the authority to act on behalf of the organisation.
- When aware of harassment, bullying or discrimination will take appropriate action, regardless of whether or not the alleged victim has raised an official complaint.
- Are responsible for promoting equality of opportunity within their day-to-day practices.
- Must ensure every aspect of service delivery embraces and promotes equality of opportunity.
- Are responsible for making staff and volunteers aware of the contents of the Equalities Policy and discuss equality and diversity issues at team and / or other relevant meetings.

Individual Staff of all levels:

- Are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Equalities Policy.
- Must behave in a way that is supportive of the Equalities Policy.
- Must inform their line managers if they suspect that discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation has taken place.

Communication:

- Staff joining The Trust will receive this policy as part of the documents contained within their induction pack.
- Current staff will be informed of the development of this policy by their line managers.
- Contractors will be made aware of this policy by those procuring their services.
- Key stakeholders will be made aware of this policy by those responsible for maintaining partnership links.

This policy is supported by the following documents:

Escalation Policy
Risk Assessments
Working with Challenging Behaviour
Compliments, Comments and complaints
Harassment and Bullying Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Grievance and Complaints Policy
Maternity Leave
Paternity/Partners Leave Policy
Incident Reporting
E-safety Policy
Confidentiality
Social Networking Policy
Disciplinary
Flexible Working
Health and Safety Policy
Recruitment Policy
Safe Recruitment Policy
Behaviour Agreement

Policy Adopted by the Board of Directors on 18/9/14

Reviewing Officer Berkeley Wilde

Responsible Officer Berkeley Wilde

Signed 

Position Chair Mark Greenburgh

Last Review Date: 08/03/21

Annex 1.1 – The Equality Act 2010, Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 brought together all existing equality legislation and offers protection from discrimination to people with “protected characteristics”. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Annex 1.2 – Discrimination

In order to understand current equality legislation the following is an explanation of the types of unfair treatment that can occur:

Direct discrimination - occurs when someone treats another person less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or an assumption about one of the above, e.g. a Black candidate being refused a job, even though they are the best candidate, purely because of the perception that they may not fit in with the rest of the team.

Discrimination by association – discrimination against someone because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic. For example, an employee who is unfairly treated because they have a disabled child - can claim discrimination.

Discrimination by perception – is discrimination against an individual because other people think they possess a protected characteristic, e.g. a heterosexual employee being unfairly treated on the basis that others think they are gay can claim discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination – is when a condition, rule, policy or practice disadvantages people who have a protected characteristic, e.g. a manager asking that employees work on Friday evenings to meet the demands of high workload may discriminate against Jewish people who wish to commence the Sabbath at sunset. However, indirect discrimination can be objectively justified, e.g. if there is an absolute organisational necessity for staff to be available to work at a certain time.

Harassment - is unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic which is intended to violate another’s dignity or to create an offensive hostile, humiliating or degrading environment for that individual. E.g. an employee being continually teased by colleagues about their gender reassignment. This is a subjective test, which means that it is not what you consider to be offensive; but what the person to whom you say or do something considers offensive. If you feel that you are being harassed, you should raise the issue via the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Victimisation - it is a discriminatory act to treat anyone less favourably if they have

made (or are suspected of having made) a complaint, or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, about discrimination during either present or previous employment, or they intend to make a complaint or they have assisted someone else's complaint by giving evidence or corroborating a story.

Annex 1.3 Equality and Human Rights Commission

For more information on the Equality and Human Rights Commission - Equality Act Code of Practice please visit their website <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

Annex 1.4 'Reasonable Adjustments'

A reasonable adjustment is defined by the UK Government here <https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

For more information on reasonable adjustments please visit the EHRC website <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-are-reasonable-adjustments>