



Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

1 Purpose

This policy sets out our commitment for inclusive and supportive working environment for all trustees, staff and volunteers where all individuals have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and any other individuals working with us.

3 Definitions

A set of definitions used in this policy is set out in Appendix 1.

4 Legislative context

4.1 This policy is set within the following legislation:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU)

4.2 More information on the Equality Act (2010) is set out in Appendix 2.

4.3 This policy will be reviewed in the light of any new legislation or regulations.

5 Policy statement

5.1 We are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices; and in so doing ensuring an inclusive culture.

5.2 We will, in carrying out all of its activities, have due regard to:

- a) The promotion of equality of opportunity;
- b) The promotion of good relations between different groups;
- c) The elimination of all indirect and direct discrimination.

5.3 We will not tolerate discrimination (including indirect discrimination), harassment (including sexual harassment), and victimisation of any kind, especially where this is based on a protected characteristic. We are determined to build an inclusive culture. Everyone's responsibilities must be seen in this context.

5.4 In publishing this policy statement we are committing to the following principles:

- a) to use equality information to inform and evaluate its future plans;
- b) to deliver and monitor the equality, diversity and inclusivity policy using evidence-based data;
- c) to support workers to meet their equality, diversity and inclusivity responsibilities through learning and development programmes;
- d) to ensure that equalities information is accessible, current and shared openly whilst observing data protection;
- e) to work towards establishing a team that reflects the diversity of local and regional communities.

5.5 As a broad principle, we aspire to meet and go beyond its legal compliance requirements in its support of its workers and beneficiaries.

6 Roles and responsibilities

6.1 It is incumbent on all members of the our community to behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to, at all times, act in a manner that does not discriminate, harass nor victimise.

6.2 Trustees

The Trustees are legally responsible for ensuring our compliance with equality and diversity legislation, seeking assurances from the staff that the organisation is delivering on its legal duties and regulatory requirements.

The Trustees will ensure there are arrangements in place to:

- a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic; and
- c) foster good relations between people who share and those who do not share a protected characteristic.

The Trustees are responsible for the approval and oversight of the implementation of equality, diversity and inclusivity policies and strategies.

6.3 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO provides leadership on equality, diversity and inclusivity, and oversees the development of policy frameworks and their application.

6.4 Members of staff and volunteers

Members of staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- a) supporting, implementing and abiding by the aims and contents of this policy statement;
- b) using their role to promote equality of opportunity;
- c) contributing to an inclusive culture which celebrates diversity, and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect;
- d) reporting any witnessed or suspected incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation immediately to the CEO or to a trustee.

7 Breach of the policy

7.1 The Trustees will take very seriously breaches of the equality, diversity and inclusion policy by anyone within the scope of this policy. Any breaches will be investigated with the intent of resolving such matters. Where appropriate, such instances may be considered under the relevant disciplinary policy for staff or volunteers.

7.2 Any breaches relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or hate incidents (this could be experienced as bullying relating to a protected characteristic) should be addressed through the following approaches:

- Employees may address this informally by approaching, in complete confidence, any trustee.
- Volunteers may discuss, in complete confidence, with the CEO.
- Referral agencies and clients should approach the CEO in the first instance, or any trustee if considered more appropriate.

Agreed by the Trustees: May 2022 – next review date is November 2025 unless relevant legislation or regulations change.

Appendix 1

Definitions

Direct discrimination

Actions where people are treated less favourably than others on grounds related to their identity as one of the above protected groups.

Diversity

Recognising, valuing and taking account of individuals' different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences to create a more productive and effective educational community.

Equal opportunity

This is the right of individuals and protected groups to equality of access and outcome in employment and service delivery.

Equality

A situation where all are able to participate and where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Harassment

There are three types of harassment which are unlawful under the Equality Act:

- Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a person because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex

Pregnancy and maternity is not protected directly under harassment provisions, however, unwanted sexual behaviour will amount to harassment related to sex.

Indirect discrimination

This occurs where a condition or requirement has been put in place which applies to all, but, in practice, has a detrimental effect upon a group of individuals that cannot be fully justified.

Positive action

This is action taken by an organisation to provide development opportunities for 'Protected groups' who are demonstrably and statistically under-represented within A4S.

Protected groups

Equality legislation currently provides protection against unlawful discrimination in employment and service delivery for these protected characteristics:

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

Victimisation

This is the treatment of someone less favourably because they have made or might make a complaint about discrimination under one of the above protected group categories.

Appendix 2

Equality Act 2010

Under equality legislation it is unlawful to:

- discriminate directly against anyone and treat them less favourably than others on the grounds of the protected characteristics of: age (unless this can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim), disability (including discrimination arising from a disability and failure to make reasonable adjustments), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. This also includes discrimination based on perception of the person e.g. a belief that someone is gay or a belief that someone is disabled even if this is not actually true.
- discriminate against someone for reasons relating to their association with a person on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation e.g. discriminating against an employee or student because they have a disabled dependant.
- discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation) unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- subject someone to harassment for reasons relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. This includes behaviour that an individual finds offensive on these grounds even if the behaviour is not directed at the individual. or harassment related to their sex.

- victimise someone because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint or allegation, or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination in line with the Equality Act.