

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Introduction:

We are an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It also seeks to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity are at the heart of this policy. "Equality" means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. "Inclusion" means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. "Diversity" means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce. "Equity" means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers ensures equal opportunities for all. We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives regarding equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

The Head of Operations has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and diversity policy and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Company.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our Organisation, as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of everyone to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality and equity throughout the Company.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the HR Officer.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our grievance procedure or through our Prevention of Bullying & Harassment at Work Policy as appropriate.

1.Scope

The Isle of Wight Youth Trust recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are discriminated against. It is the Charity's policy to comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

2. The work of the Charity

The Trust aims to advance education and training of young people on the Isle of Wight through the relief of poverty, distress and sickness, and improvement and preservation of health for young people. The charity seeks to meet the need for an independent service which bridges the gap in the network of care provided for young people by the statutory agencies in the Isle of Wight.

Service User Approach

As a youth agency the Youth Trust offers any young person living on the Isle of Wight the opportunity to access the service for support. The Youth Trust welcome referrals from all areas of the Island and under the Equality Act 2010 hold no discrimination (other than as a youth agency there is a specific age range).

In order to give each young person, the best outcome possible each new referral is discussed during the weekly triage meeting as to the best way forward which would include matching to the most suitable practitioners. This is further assessed at an assessment session between the young person and the assessor. At assessment, a discussion will take place about how the young person would like to work, ie: talking therapy, CBT, creatively. If they have a preference this will be noted.

To make the service easily accessible a young person can self-refer, face to face, by phone and email or via the online referral system. The range of referral methods gives young people the most accessible pathway suited to their individual needs. If a young person is struggling to attend sessions, they can access a travel fund which will provide bus fare for themselves and parent, if appropriate for the whole course of their sessions.

A wellbeing hygiene unit is situated in the main offices which is available for all young people to take any supplies they may require; it contains a range of day to day hygiene supplies.

3. Employees

The Trust is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the grounds mentioned above. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training, pay or any other benefits will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

The charity recognises that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice, but that it also makes sound business sense. This equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

4. Volunteers

The Trust believes that everyone has the right to volunteer. No volunteer will be discriminated against on the grounds mentioned above.

The Trust recognises the value of volunteers and their potential contribution to the aims and services of the charity. We expect all staff, whether paid or voluntary, to be treated with the same level of respect and dignity, with volunteers being included in all areas of the business. Training and development opportunities will also be made available, as for paid staff, and we expect volunteers to treat their role and contribution seriously and diligently.

5. To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all:

- Job applicants and potential applicants
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Clients
- Office-holders such as Trustees
- Contract Workers and Sub-Contractors
- Students and apprentices
- Former employees

6. Youth Trust commitments

- Promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment for all persons
- Eliminating occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, disability discrimination, victimisation and harassment
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with dignity and respect
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Fulfilling all its legal obligations under the anti-discrimination legislation and the associated codes of practice
- Complying with this equal opportunity policy and associated policies

Our commitment as an employer

The Organisation is committed to:

- creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- providing training, development and progression opportunities to all staff
- understanding equality and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and inclusion for all
- taking steps to ensure equity amongst our workforce such as ensuring that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential candidates and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in our Company, taking positive action to recruit disabled people and ensuring there are no unlawful barriers to accessing our employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities
- diversity in our workforce will be regularly monitored to ensure equal opportunities throughout the Company. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary obstacles and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
- monitoring and reviewing this policy annually.

Our commitment as a service provider

The Organisation is committed to:

- providing services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients

- taking steps to ensure equity amongst our clients and service users such as removing any unlawful obstacles to accessing our services or facilities. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
- fully supporting this policy by senior management and ensuring agreement has been reached with employee representatives, if applicable
- monitoring and reviewing this policy annually
- having clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Equal opportunity policy statements

Age

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that people are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

Disability

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities. If we feel that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will discuss this with you and try to find an alternative solution where possible
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation
- if you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate
- we will keep the physical features of our premises under review to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.
- We will make every effort to ensure our services are accessible to people with disabilities, making a commitment to deliver them through community-based, accessible venues across the Island.
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Race

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents
- actively promote race equality and inclusion in the Company
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Gender

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about gender

- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same
- provide support to prevent discrimination against people who have, who are, or who are going to undergo gender reassignment.

Sexual orientation

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQ+ communities
- promote positive images of the LGBTQ+ communities
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the LGBTQ+ communities
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Religion or belief

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Pregnancy or maternity

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity during pregnancy or maternity leave
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about pregnancy or maternity
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged during pregnancy or maternity leave and that we take account of the needs of our employees during pregnancy or maternity leave.

Marriage or civil partnership

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity regardless of marriage or civil partnership status
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged as a result of their marriage or civil partnership status.

Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a *pro rata* basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

Equal pay

We will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value

8. Implementation

In order to implement this policy, the Trust will:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants and relevant others (such as contract workers and sub-contractors).
- Incorporate compliance with the policy into the job descriptions of all staff.
- Provide equal opportunities training and guidance where appropriate.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion are aware of their responsibilities under this policy.
- Incorporate equal opportunities information into the charity's general communications practices.
- Obtain commitments from other persons and organisations, such as sub-contractors or recruitment agencies, that they too will comply with this policy in their dealings with our organisation, clients, workforce and volunteers.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this policy.

9. Complaints

The Trust recognises that employees have a right to complain about discrimination and harassment should it occur. The Trust has established an internal grievance procedure to deal with such complaints. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees making complaints of discrimination and harassment, and others who give evidence or information in connection with a complaint, will not be victimised (i.e., they will not be discriminated against in retaliation for their actions). Victimisation is also discrimination contrary to the anti-discrimination legislation and to this policy. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

In addition to the Trust's internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination or harassment to an employment tribunal under the anti-discrimination legislation.

However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under the internal grievance procedure first.

10. Accessible Information Standard

The Accessible Information Standard is a guidance document that considers best practice to ensure that everyone has access to information in a way and format they can understand. The Trust commits to providing accessible information and will use this standard as a guide wherever possible.

11. Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy lies with the Head of Operations and the SLT. All Trustees, paid staff and volunteers have a responsibility to comply with it.

A breach of this policy will be dealt with by following the relevant grievance or disciplinary procedure.

This policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees and the senior leadership team.

12. CODE OF PRACTICE

The Trust will not accept discrimination in its activities or in the recruitment, training, support and conduct of volunteers, staff or users, on the grounds outlined in the policy statement.

Provision of activities

Despite limited resources, we will:

- Ensure that our services respond to the needs of a wide range of clients. We aim to reach our maximum potential yet remain realistic about what can be offered. Any limitations that exist are not intended to preclude any individual from benefiting from a service.
- Provide information and advice and where relevant signpost people to appropriate services.
- We will strive to use venues and facilities that take into account the needs of vulnerable children and young people (or where relevant their parents), including those in a wheelchair, those with an autism spectrum condition, those with hearing/visual or speech impairments.
- We will engage with children and young people to better understand their needs

Publicity

- We will avoid using jargon and abbreviations in all publicity to aid clarity.
- Any images or pictures will reflect the range of people we want to attract.

A written outline of the activities and services will be provided to all relevant community groups and statutory agencies to clearly explain how to access the activities and how we prioritise people on any waiting list.

Publicity material will also be made available in other formats in order that it can be accessed or enhanced via IT or other systems to aid communication to those with visual or hearing impairments.

Involving people

We will encourage people from all backgrounds to be involved as volunteers, users, staff or senior leadership team members so that we have a broad range of knowledge, skills and perspectives in the group.

Recruitment, support and training procedures will be clear, will apply to all and will be flexible enough to take into account the needs and circumstances of particular individuals. We will publicise that we support equal opportunities in general publicity material, volunteer recruitment, job adverts etc. Staff awareness is essential to the implementation of policy.

Recruitment, support and training of volunteers

- We will advertise volunteering opportunities in places and in mediums which will attract a wide range of people.
- We will match volunteers to appropriate tasks and not ask for unnecessary requirements.
- Volunteers will be provided with a clear description of their role.
- We will be sensitive to particular requirements/attributes volunteers may have.
- All volunteers will be offered induction, information training and support to enable them to be confident in fulfilling their role. Volunteers will discuss their additional support needs with their supervisor on a regular basis and we will strive to meet identified needs. The assumption will be avoided that age and retraining do not go together, as adaptability and the ability to acquire new skills are not related to age.

Recruitment of staff, support and training

- Recruitment will be on merit and potential.
- All jobs will be advertised where appropriate unless posts are being filled as a result of redundancy.
- All candidates will follow the same assessment process. Reasons for not short-listing and final interview decisions will be recorded on the application forms and kept for 6 months.
- We will take a positive approach to the development of staff.

A provision will be made in budgets for training and support to be offered to:

- Allow re-entry to employment for new employees or former employees who have had a career break.
- Staff who wish to develop new skills to enhance their performance.
- People from disadvantaged groups to enable them to progress and be promoted within the organisation.

Related Policies

Volunteer Policy
Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
Code of Conduct
Grievance Procedure
Disciplinary Policy

Policy Title	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
Policy Reference Number	026a
Last Updated	June 2025
Next Scheduled Update Due	June 2028