

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) affects everybody. It impacts every part of our work, whether it's the young people we support, organisations, and supporters we work with or our staff and volunteers. Only by recognising and valuing differences and treating everyone with dignity and respect can we create a truly effective organisation that has a positive impact on people's lives. While everyone is expected to uphold this policy, it does not form part of any staff member's contract of employment and may be amended or replaced at any time
- 1.2 To provide equality, equity, fairness and respect for all members of staff, including volunteers, governors and trustees. In the case of employed staff whether permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time or employed on a casual/contract basis.
- 1.3 To not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as well as considering indirect discrimination in recruitment practices and pay comparisons
- 1.4 To provide enhanced protections against indirect discrimination, including protections for those who may not share a protected characteristic but suffer disadvantages from misinterpreted organisational policies.
- 1.5 To oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with whistleblowing complaints, grievances and disciplinaries, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

2. Statutory Guidance

- 2.1 [The Equality Act 2010](#) is the guiding statutory legislation that sets out the protections and characteristics underpinning EDI. Professional bodies, from time to time, provide research and support best practice for organisations to adopt such as ACAS, CIPD and the EHRC (Equality & Human Rights Commission).

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 At Ambitious about Autism, our vision is to cultivate a future where every autistic child and young person can be their authentic selves and achieve their aspirations. Our mission is to advocate for their rights and create meaningful opportunities.

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- 3.2 We are dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusivity across all facets of our organisation—from governance and leadership to the services we provide and our broader advocacy efforts. By prioritising equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), we aim to build a high-performing, dynamic, and compassionate organisation that can genuinely transform the lives of all autistic children and young people.
- 3.3 We aspire to be an organisation that embraces, enables, and champions EDI, ensuring that everyone feels they belong and can bring their whole selves to Ambitious about Autism. Through our advocacy, we seek to have a positive impact on society.
- 3.4 Our commitment to EDI underpins all our work, fostering a culture where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute. By championing EDI, we enhance our capacity to meet the needs of those we serve, ultimately enriching our mission and driving impactful change in the communities we support.

4. The Key Principles

- 4.1 The organisation expects everyone who works with us to support our commitment to this policy and to take steps to actively uphold its principles. All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, stakeholders, suppliers and the public.
- 4.2 Staff members are also expected to uphold the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in our outward-facing work and must familiarise themselves with and adhere to the principles of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies for each educational setting. .
- 4.3 Staff members are also expected to adhere to the following key principles:
 - 4.3.1 Embed EDI into all our key policies to form the golden thread in all we do. This will be achieved through policy review within the governance calendar.
 - 4.3.2 Actively promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
 - 4.3.3 Maintain a working environment which is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - 4.3.4 Staff responsibilities include conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
 - 4.3.5 Take seriously complaints of whistleblowing, bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees,

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stakeholders, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the organisation's work activities.

Complaints will be dealt with under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures (as appropriate). If a finding of misconduct is

made, appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious acts could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

- 4.3.6 Staff or volunteers who feel they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or unfairly treated in a manner contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue under the Grievance procedure.
- 4.3.7 Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in line with our Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure.
- 4.3.8 Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 is a criminal offence.
- 4.3.9 Make opportunities for training, development and progression available to all staff, taking into account the individual's needs. Staff will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 4.3.10 Take decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 4.3.11 Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also updating them and the policy to take account of changes in the law, including indirect discrimination protections and changes in definitions of disability.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Details of those responsible for monitoring and delivering our EDI strategy and policy are as follows:

- 5.1 EDI Organisational Lead, The CEO is the overall EDI organisational lead and monitors the delivery of the full strategy.
- 5.2 Executive Leadership Team (ELT) - Responsible for delivering EDI strategic priorities and overarching goals in the strategy through agreed objectives and associated tasks within their operations plan.
- 5.3 Senior Management Team (SMT) members – Responsible for monitoring the delivery of the EDI strategic priorities and overarching goals within their areas outlined in the ops plan.
- 5.4 EDI & Wellbeing Business Partner - Responsible for coordinating the full design, delivery and evaluation of the EDI strategy and plans, working collaboratively with

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SMT, EDI Committee, Staff Council, Staff Forums, Staff Networks and People team. Additionally designs and provides training as well as support to staff and people managers/leaders.

- 5.5 The EDI Committee - is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the 'Inclusive workplace' pillar of the EDI Strategy. The Committee includes the Director of People and Culture, Head of People, , EDI & Wellbeing Business Partner, then up to ten additional colleagues from across the organisation.
- 5.6 The Director of People and Culture is responsible for updating the policy for Trustee approval as per the policy update schedule..
- 5.7 The External Affairs team supports our external communications on the website and the Internal Communications Advisor supports internal communications on OneWorld.
- 5.8 The Joint Group Board Committee has a nominated EDI Trustee(s) who supports with Board EDI practices.

6. Other Key Policies

- 6.1 The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy and are available on the Policies and Procedures portal on OneWorld:
 - Dignity at Work Policy
 - Code of Conduct Policy
 - Grievance Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Recruitment and Selection Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - [Anti-Sexual Harassment](#)

7. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Director of People and Culture.

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