

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

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1.0 Purpose and Legal Basis

This Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy is a foundational governance document for the charity. It provides a formal framework to ensure that all of the charity's operations, governance activities, and service delivery are conducted in a manner that is fair, accessible, and inclusive. The principles outlined herein are fundamental to the charity's ability to fulfil its core mission to support its beneficiary community with integrity and effectiveness.

Purpose

The core purposes of this policy are directly aligned with the charity's objects as defined in Clause 3 of its constitution. This policy exists to:

- Ensure that all support activities designed to ease suffering and enhance wellbeing are delivered in a fair, accessible, and inclusive manner.
- Ensure that grants provided to deserving cases of need are awarded based on fair and transparent criteria, free from any form of discrimination.

- Promote a culture of dignity and respect in all activities related to the objects of the charity.
- Prevent discrimination within the charity's interactions with trustees, volunteers, contractors, and beneficiaries.
- Meet the charity's legal and regulatory obligations and demonstrate its commitment to best practices in governance.

Legal Basis

This policy has been developed to ensure the charity's full compliance with all relevant UK legislation. The primary legal framework underpinning this policy is the Equality Act 2010. The policy also reflects the general duties required by the Charity Commission for England and Wales for all charities regarding public benefit and the principles of good governance.

2.0 Scope

A clear definition of scope is a prerequisite for effective governance, ensuring that the principles of this policy are consistently embedded across all operations and that all individuals connected to the charity understand their rights and responsibilities. This section outlines the universal application of the policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of the charity's operations and to every individual involved with the charity, in any capacity. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Trustees:** The policy applies to all governance activities, including Board decision-making, the recruitment and appointment of new trustees, and the oversight of the charity's strategic direction.
- **Staff:** The policy applies to all aspects of potential future employment, including recruitment, selection, training, and promotion, as permitted under Clause 4(4) of the charity's constitution.
- **Volunteers:** The policy applies to the recruitment, training, and conduct of all volunteers, and governs their interactions with beneficiaries, trustees, and other stakeholders.
- **Contractors and Third-Party Service Providers:** The policy applies to all external contractors and organisations engaged to deliver services on behalf of the charity, whose adherence to these principles will form part of their contractual obligations.
- **Beneficiaries:** The policy applies to all aspects of service delivery, ensuring fair and equitable access to the support, grants, and activities provided by the charity as defined in Clause 3 of its constitution.

3.0 Policy Statement

The Board of Trustees of the charity is fully committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all of its activities. We believe that embracing diversity and ensuring equal

opportunity is not only a legal and moral imperative but is also essential to fulfilling our mission to serve the Beneficiary Community effectively.

The charity is committed to ensuring that no individual involved with the charity—including trustees, future staff, volunteers, contractors, or beneficiaries—receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any of the charity's activities. The Board is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where every person is treated with dignity and respect.

4.0 Definitions

To ensure the consistent and correct application of this policy, it is essential that all parties share a common understanding of key terms. The following definitions are provided in the context of the charity's operations and the relevant legal frameworks.

- **Protected Characteristics:** The nine characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- **Discrimination:** Treating a person unfairly because of a protected characteristic. This can take several forms:
 - **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.
 - **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a rule, policy, or practice that has a discriminatory effect on a group of people with a particular protected characteristic.
 - **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
 - **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint related to discrimination.
- **Equality:** Ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and given equal access to opportunities, without being hindered by prejudice or discrimination.
- **Diversity:** Recognising, valuing, and taking positive account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences.
- **Inclusion:** Creating a culture and environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and able to participate fully in the charity's activities.
- **Beneficiary:** As defined in Clause 3(1) of the charity's constitution.

5.0 Procedures

These procedures provide the practical, step-by-step guidance necessary to embed the policy statement into the charity's day-to-day operations and decision-making processes. They ensure that our commitment to equality and diversity is translated into consistent and compliant action.

Recruitment and Appointment

All appointments of Trustees, future staff, and volunteers will be conducted fairly and transparently. Selection will be based on an individual's skills, knowledge, and experience relevant to the role, as required by Clause 10(2) of the constitution. All public-facing recruitment advertisements and role descriptions will include a standardised Equal Opportunities statement affirming the charity's commitment. The charity will make all reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities to ensure they are not disadvantaged in the selection process.

Service Delivery and grant making

The charity will ensure that all beneficiaries have fair and equal access to the charity's support services and financial assistance. The criteria for providing support and awarding grants will be clear, objective, and directly related to the charity's objects. These criteria will be applied consistently to all applicants without discrimination and will be periodically reviewed by the Board to ensure they do not inadvertently create barriers to access for any subgroup of beneficiaries.

Working with Contractors

When engaging third-party contractors or service providers, the charity will ensure they are aware of this policy. Adherence to the principles of equality and diversity will be a consideration in the due diligence and contracting process.

Complaints and Grievances

Any individual covered by this policy who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation is encouraged to raise their concerns. The charity will ensure that any individual making a complaint is protected from victimisation as defined in Section 5.0. All complaints will be taken seriously, treated confidentially, and investigated promptly and impartially. For detailed procedural steps, individuals should refer to the charity's separate Complaints Handling Policy.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Clear accountability is vital for ensuring this policy is actively implemented and maintained, rather than remaining a passive document. Responsibility for upholding the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion is shared across the entire organisation.

Role	Specific Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	Holds overall responsibility for the policy's formal adoption, implementation, and regular review. Responsible for championing equality, diversity, and inclusion at a strategic level and for ensuring the charity complies with its legal duties.
The Chairman	Acts as the lead for promoting the policy's principles within the Board and to external stakeholders. Responsible for ensuring that any serious breaches of the policy are addressed appropriately.
All Trustees, Staff (future), and Volunteers	To act in accordance with this policy, treat everyone with dignity and respect, and challenge and report any discriminatory behaviour through the appropriate channels as defined in the charity's Complaints Handling Policy.
Contractors	To adhere to the principles of this policy as a condition of their engagement and contract with the charity.

7.0 Implementation

A formal implementation plan is essential to ensure that this policy is effectively communicated, understood, and embedded across all levels of the charity. This ensures our principles are translated into consistent practice.

Communication

This policy will be provided to all new trustees and volunteers as part of their induction process. It will be made available to beneficiaries, contractors, and other stakeholders upon request to ensure transparency about the charity's commitments.

Training

All Trustees will receive an induction on this policy and their legal duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Further training will be provided as necessary to ensure their knowledge remains current.

Resource Allocation

The Board of Trustees will ensure that any necessary resources for implementing this policy, such as for training or for making reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities, are made available.

8.0 Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

Ongoing oversight is of strategic importance to ensure this policy remains legally compliant, effective in practice, and relevant to the charity's evolving operations and the needs of its beneficiaries. This section outlines the framework for this continuous improvement cycle.

Monitoring

The Board of Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy using the following key performance indicators:

- Annual analysis of beneficiary feedback, collected via surveys or focus groups, specifically assessing perceptions of fairness and accessibility of services.
- Quarterly review of the complaints log by the Board, with specific analysis to identify any patterns of perceived discrimination or harassment that require strategic intervention.
- Maintenance of a formal training and induction register, reviewed annually by the Board, confirming 100% policy acknowledgement and training completion for all new appointees.

Review

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the formal review of this policy. The policy will be reviewed at a minimum on an annual basis, as noted in the policy header, or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, Charity Commission guidance, or the charity's operations.

9.0 Related Policies and Documents

This Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy operates within a wider framework of the charity's governance and should be read in conjunction with other key documents to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive approach.

- the charity's Constitution
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy (to be developed)
- Whistleblowing Policy (to be developed)
- Trustee Payment Policy (to be developed)
- Trustee Recruitment Procedures

- Grant Making Procedures