

# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The Foundation wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality of opportunity in employment and throughout all of its projects and programmes.

## 3.0 SCOPE

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues, visitors and participants with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, visitors or participants regardless of their status.

## 4.0 POLICY DETAILS

We are unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination being applied against staff members of the Foundation, or anyone who uses our services on the grounds of the following **protected characteristics**:

- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Transgender reassignment
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marital/civil partner status
- Disability

- Age
- Pregnancy / maternity

**The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.**

**This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.**

We will take every possible step to ensure that staff members are treated fairly and that decisions on all aspects of employment (including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management, retirement and so on) and participation on any of our projects and programmes are based solely on an individual's skills, qualities and needs.

Every staff member has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, will be taken against any staff member, of whatever seniority, who contravenes this policy. The Foundation will not tolerate retaliation against or victimisation of any staff member involved in the bringing of a complaint of harassment under the Foundation's procedure. Such retaliation or victimisation will itself constitute a disciplinary offence, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to dismissal.

### Definitions:

**Equality and diversity** is about creating environments which encourage individuals to achieve their full potential and about challenging myths and stereotypes. It is not about treating everyone the same. It is about treating everyone according to their own individual needs and is essential to good working practice.

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

**Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

**Victimisation** is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

Harassment and bullying **relates to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.**

Examples of harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse
- Offensive jokes, pranks or songs
- Lewd or suggestive comments
- Requests for sexual favours
- Verbally or physically threatening behaviour
- Abusing power or using unfair penal sanctions
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property

- Ostracising or excluding colleagues from work events or social activities
- Displaying inflammatory or abusive literature or graffiti
- Using e-mail or the internet for the purpose of bullying or making abusive or offensive remarks

### **Important Information**

Bullying and harassment does not include appropriately conducted criticism of a member of staff's behaviour or job performance by relevant people.

A staff member may be bullied or harassed by a colleague or subordinate as well as by a manager or supervisor.

Some forms of harassment plainly constitute gross misconduct for the purposes of the Foundation's disciplinary procedure and will normally merit summary dismissal.

It is also important to recognise that what one staff member may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable and that the essence of harassment and bullying is that the words or behaviour are unwelcome to the particular person who is the target of the words or behaviour. All staff members must treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Staff should be aware that as well as committing a disciplinary offence, an individual found by an employment tribunal to have harassed a fellow employee in the course of their employment may be personally liable to compensate the victim. In addition, harassment for whatever reason may constitute a crime punishable by imprisonment or a fine.

### **Commitment**

The Foundation of Light Board of Trustees promotes equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion across all Foundation programmes, employees, volunteers and stakeholders.

The Foundation is committed to:

- Accessibility to our activities for all young people
- Challenging discrimination and stereotyping, prejudice and assumptions
- Promoting and respecting diversity

- Offering a safe environment
- Promoting opportunities for girls in areas where they are disadvantaged or disproportionately under-represented
- Promoting opportunities for young people with a disability in areas where they are disadvantaged or disproportionately under-represented
- Offering training for staff and volunteers
- Providing positive role models
- Displaying positive publicity
- Reviewing policy and working towards securing more equality of opportunity

## Objectives

The Foundation recognises its obligations and responsibilities under current legislation. The Foundation's objectives are to ensure that:

- Staff are aware of their personal obligations to avoid discrimination in accordance with this Equality and Diversity Policy.
- No participant, applicant or staff member is treated less favourably than another in accordance with this policy.
- No participant, applicant or staff member is placed at a disadvantage by requirements, conditions or procedures which have a disproportionately adverse effect on them and cannot be shown to be necessary for the satisfactory completion of the job or activity.
- Entry into the Foundation and opportunities for promotion and training are available to all applicants.
- No individual is discriminated against in accordance with this policy in respect of selection for redundancy, short time working or dismissal.
- Where appropriate and permissible within the law, members of under-represented groups are given training and are encouraged to achieve equality of opportunity.



- Access and opportunities to participate in any of the Foundation's community activities are available to all.
- Retain Equality and Diversity Gold Standard, year on year.

### **Breaches of this policy**

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Behaviour and language contrary to the spirit of this policy will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and objectives the following procedures will be adopted:

## **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

Overall responsibility for ensuring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion standards are maintained and the strategy and action plan are up to date, ratified and utilised lies with the Chief Executive.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring knowledge and training is passed to employees within their team.

Delivery Coordinators are responsible for ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is included in lesson plans, to include British Values and Prevent, and that the relevant information and behaviour standards are relayed to participants.

The Foundation will ensure that staff are made aware of the provisions of this policy and of their personal responsibilities by bringing these responsibilities to their attention on induction and in regularly training sessions etc. Any incidents of discrimination and/or harassment will be fully investigated.

All staff have a responsibility to co-operate with and adopt the requirements of this policy, so as to develop and maintain a working environment in which harassment and bullying are understood by all to be unacceptable.

It is fully expected that all staff will act responsibly regarding this issue. False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Therefore, should investigation show that a false accusation has been made in bad faith, appropriate disciplinary action, which could include dismissal will follow. However, a staff member who brings a complaint in good faith will not be subject to any detriment by the Foundation.

**This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.**

## **6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Procedure

Religious Diversity in the Work Place Policy

Training Policy and Procedure

Dignity at Work Policy

Discipline at Work Policy and Procedure

EDI Action Plan

## **REVIEW**

This policy is reviewed every three years.