

EARLY YEARS ALLIANCE

Registered as an Educational Charity

Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity Policy

1.0 Introduction

The Charity is committed to recognising, valuing and respecting the diversity of its employees, job applicants, service users, members, volunteers and trustees. The Charity recognises that everyone has a contribution to make and it aims to ensure that all individuals with whom it has contact will be treated in a fair and consistent manner.

The Charity recognises that certain people face discrimination based on factors such as their race, ethnic or national origins, religion and belief, gender, gender re-assignment, disability, sexuality, age, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity and linguistic ability. With this in mind, the Charity will work within the current legislative framework and within the sphere of best practice in order to promote equality and value diversity, and work to address unfair treatment, discrimination and prejudice where found within the workplace and in its work in the sector.

It is expected that the principles of diversity and equality will underpin all of its work.

The Charity recognises that it has an important leadership role within the sector in terms of promoting and encouraging tolerance, fairness and equality and in influencing other service providers and employers within the sector.

2.0 Definitions

Diversity

People are not alike. Everyone is different. Diversity therefore consists of visible and non-visible factors, which include personal characteristics such as sex, race, age, background, culture, disability, personality and work-style. Harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, their talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are met. Diversity, therefore, is valuing everyone as an individual. It follows from this that there is no single way of treating employees, as each one will have their own personal needs, values and beliefs.

Equality

Equality consists of equality of access, equal opportunity and anti discriminatory practice. Being equal in this context is about having equal rights and status.

3.0 Principles

- All staff, volunteers and trustees are entitled to undertake their tasks in an environment which promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

- The Charity seeks to provide service users and members with services that are relevant to their needs and to give, where possible, all sections of the community equal access to those services.
- There is an important moral case for being committed to diversity and equality – that is, it is simply the right thing to do.
- A commitment to diversity and equality within the working and wider environment is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- This policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team.
- This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure that it is effective and is in line with changes in legislation and best practice.
- All employees, volunteers and service users will have access to this policy.
- The Charity will work within current legislation and best practice. Any initiatives pertaining to diversity and equality will be in relation to the availability of Charity funds.

4.0 Employment

All employees will be treated with dignity and in a fair and consistent manner. They will be guided and encouraged to develop to their full potential. All the talents and resources of employees will be fully utilised to maximise the effectiveness of the Charity and create a harmonious working environment.

Recruitment and selection

The Charity recognises and understands the strategic importance of achieving a diverse workforce, which reflects the communities in which it operates. To this end, the Charity will work towards achieving a workforce that is truly representative of these communities.

The Charity will aim to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origins, religion, gender, disability, sexuality, age, marital status, political beliefs or any other factor irrelevant to the selection process.

The Charity's detailed policy and procedures in this area can be found in its recruitment and selection policy and procedure.

Induction, learning and development

The Charity believes that all staff should have access to appropriate induction and development opportunities both in order to carry out their jobs and to be able to contribute as widely as possible to the success of the organisation. The provision of induction and training and development will be made in a transparent and fair way. Specifically, the Charity will undertake to:

- Inform and explain to employees this policy on joining the organisation.
- Ensure that all employees attend the organisation's diversity awareness workshops in order to promote understanding of and commitment to all the principles within equality and diversity.
- Ensure that all employees have equal access and are aware of training, learning and development opportunities open to them and are encouraged to take ownership of their own development.
- Monitor learning and development activity to ensure equality of access across all employee groups
- Ensure that development and performance management activities such as appraisal are transparent, fair and based on competence.

The Charity's detailed policy and procedures in this area can be found in the Learning and Development policy.

Work life balance

The Charity recognises that at various stages in employees working lives, domestic, dependant and family commitments and responsibilities may impact on their ability to fulfil work responsibilities. To support staff during these periods, the Charity offers practical support through its staff support leave arrangements. These include: maternity leave, dependency leave, compassionate leave, paternity leave (and paternity leave for adoptive parents) full paternity entitlement and parental and adoption leave

Bullying, harassment and grievances

Employees have a right to be able to work in an environment free from bullying, harassment and victimisation. Any employee who feels that they have been treated unfairly, in any way, will have their concerns taken seriously and may use the Charity's grievance procedure. The Charity does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment and will take appropriate action to ensure that any cases that come to light are dealt with appropriately.

Responsibilities of all employees

All employees, at all levels of the organisation, have a personal responsibility, under this policy, and are required to co-operate with measures introduced to ensure that the Charity is able undertake its commitment to equality and diversity . They should not practise discrimination themselves or attempt to induce other employees to practise unlawful discrimination. In particular, they are expected to follow all relevant procedures adopted by the Charity and are expected to report incidents of harassment, abuse, victimisation and pressure to discriminate where these occur.

Managers, in particular, are required to:

- Make the law and this policy clear to employees they manage.
- Ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

Breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

There will be a continuous review of all Human Resources policies and procedures and training programmes in line with this policy.

5.0 Volunteers and Trustees

The Charity was built by volunteers and their importance is a central theme running through the whole organisation. Volunteers contribute unique skills and experience and have become powerful advocates for the Charity. The involvement of volunteers from diverse communities ensures that the Charity is responsive to the needs of the communities in which it operates.

The Charity believes in the importance of volunteers as a significant part of its human resources and, as a consequence, volunteers will be seen as a resource which offers benefits to the Charity in return for the volunteers obtaining something of value to themselves through networking, friendships and personal development opportunities.

When appointing volunteers, and during induction, the Charity will ensure that they have information about the development opportunities open to them, and access to relevant policies and procedures that the Charity is expected to comply with, including an explanation of this policy. The Charity will aim to ensure that opportunities to volunteers are not affected by race, ethnic or national origins, religion, gender, disability, sexuality, age, marital status, political beliefs or any other factor irrelevant to the process.

The Charity recognises the importance of providing volunteers with the opportunity to receive diversity awareness training so that they are able to contribute to the Charity achieving its aims around diversity.

The Charity will work to ensure equality of opportunity and representation amongst its board of trustees within the parameters of its electoral and co-option systems.

6.0 Service users and members

The Charity is committed to promoting diversity and equality throughout all of its service provision activities, publications, promotion, research, training courses, assessment, monitoring and accreditation.

The Charity aims to avoid the stereotyping of children and adults by enabling its members to select and use materials which promote diversity, equality and portray a positive image.

The Charity will ensure that:

- All members of the community have equal access to its services.
- Services are widely promoted and advertised in a way that reflects the diversity of society.
- Partnerships with disadvantaged communities are fostered and developed.

- Information is provided in clear and concise spoken and written language.
- Alternative languages and formats are available, when appropriate and on request.
- Each service user is treated equally and not discriminated against because of individual needs and differences.
- Ensuring a variety of accessible venues and times for meetings, when appropriate.

As a training provider, the Charity seeks to match learning and training to individual needs by:

- Assessing and meeting the individual needs of learners.
- Providing clear information and offering pre-course advice in a range of formats.
- Offering fully differentiated and accessible training courses.
- Maintaining quality and high standards through the use of appropriate monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensuring a variety of accessible venues and times for courses.
- Working to identify new and changing training needs.

Any volunteer, member, service user or trustee who feels that they have been treated unfairly, should refer to the Charity's complaints procedure.

7.0 Responsibilities and Monitoring

Although the overall responsibility for this policy will rest with the Charity's Senior Management Team and the responsibility for its implementation and monitoring with the Chief Executive Officer, all employees and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of and to uphold the principles within this policy.

8.0 Internal employee documents relevant to this policy

- Dignity at work policy
- Code of conduct
- Staff handbook
- Managers handbook
- Staff support policy
- Age discrimination guidance
- Recruitment and selection policy
- Redundancy guidelines
- Training and development policy
- Grievance policy
- Employee Charter

9.0 External documents relevant to this policy

- Complaints procedure

10.0 Legislation relevant to this policy (this list is not exhaustive)

- **The Equality Act 2010** which came into force on 1st October 2010 and replaced previous equality legislation, for example, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1986 and Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- **Special Educational Needs Disability Act 2001**

11.0 Policy Review

Reviewed October 2020. Next review date October 2021.

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