**TEMPLATE EQUITY POLICY**

This template is intended as a guide for your organisation to create a suitable policy for your organisation. It should always be checked to ensure that all activities or considerations are covered by this document. The legal information and definitions contained are correct as of January 2022.

The sections in **\*RED\*** are you to edit to tailor the organisation’s details. **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** if for the name of the group/organisation. **\*INSERT ROLES\*** is for the different categories within (e.g staff, volunteers, trustees, committee, board) **\*INSERT POSITION\*** is the person acting as the lead for Equity (e.g Chair, Manager, Volunteer Manager)

### INTRODUCTION

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** is committed to providing a place in which everyone’s hopes and aspirations can be made real. Our diverse community is one of our greatest strengths with people of many different life experiences, cultural/ethnic backgrounds and faiths living side by side. Supporting all our communities to thrive in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination is a core strand running through our mission as an organisation. We want to ensure people are not held back by poverty or their circumstance and that our success is shared. This Equity Policy discusses the actions we will take to support that journey.

This policy applies to everyone involved: beneficiaries, employees whether part-time, full-time, fixed-term or temporary, contractors, volunteers and trustees.

## **Why Equity?**

Equity is about [giving people what they need](https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/equity-and-equality-are-not-equal/), to make things fair. Giving more to those who need it. This is not the same as equality (the traditional term for a policy such as this), nor is it the same as inequality. It is simply giving more to those who need it, which is proportionate to their circumstances, to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities.

Equity is an approach that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity recognizes that we don’t all start from the same place because advantages and barriers exist. It’s a process that acknowledges uneven starting places and seeks to correct the imbalance. Diversity and inclusion are both outcomes. Equity is not. It refers to the process an organisation engages in to ensure that people with marginalised identities have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop.

## **Equality vs. Equity**

The difference between equality and equity must be emphasised. Although both promote fairness, equality achieves this through treating everyone the same regardless of need, while equity achieves this through treating people differently dependent on need. However, this different treatment may be the key to reaching equality.

### OUR VALUES

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** is committed to social justice and working with those who are most excluded and disadvantaged

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** celebrates our society as diverse in circumstance, race, culture, faith and other beliefs, sexuality, abilities, gender and age.

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** is committed to challenging disadvantage and inequality and aims to promote diversity and equality in all areas of its work and structures.

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** believes:

* In working to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
* That we must consistently take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
* In encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in our services or other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
* That all people have equal rights to work towards social justice and to participate in decision-making processes and local action
* That priority should be given to working with communities and groups whose full participation in society is limited by economic disadvantage or discrimination
* That the role of **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** is to affirm and enable all people to**… INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE ORGANISATION**.

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will not unlawfully discriminate because the Equality Act 2010 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 (or absence of), sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

\*INSERT ORGANISATION\* also acknowledges that in recognition of our local community, there may be situations that require additional characteristics or situations to be added to support the people we support. Some of these include (but are not exclusive to) personal presentation, class status, body weight, hobbies / cultural choices or strata/group of a particular demographic.

All of this is with the mission of working towards a just and participatory community.

###### DISCRIMINATION

Direct Discrimination is when you treat someone less favourably than others. **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will treat direct discrimination very seriously and if applicable, as a disciplinary matter.

Indirect Discrimination is when a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone might disadvantage a particular group, and cannot be justified concerning the process. **\*INSERT POSITION\*** will act on behalf of **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** to monitor and regularly review its policies, practices and procedures to ensure that they do not disadvantage any particular group.

Discrimination by association is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses one of the applicable protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation). It is unlawful and **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will treat it as a disciplinary manner.

Perception discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not possess that characteristic. It is unlawful and **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will treat it as a disciplinary matter about age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy/maternity and sex.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. \***INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will treat harassment as a disciplinary matter.

Victimisation is when you treat someone less favourably or discriminate against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination. **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will treat victimisation as a disciplinary matter.

**POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION VS POSITIVE ACTION**

Positive discrimination is unlawful. Positive discrimination is when you give preferential treatment to people with a protected characteristic rather than due to their suitability.

Positive action is used instead to address imbalances in those involved in the organisation is allowed in particular circumstances. Examples would include setting equality targets (but *not* unlawful quotas); encouraging people from particular groups to participate where they are under-represented; training for promotion or skill training for individuals from under-represented groups who show potential. **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will use positive action to address imbalances **(that are apparent from monitoring data \*optional\*)**.

###### OUR CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS

We believe everyone has inherent dignity.

We intend to ensure that no one involved in **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** receives less favourable treatment due to a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), unrelated criminal convictions, culture or class situation or membership or non-membership of a society / trade union. All **\*INSERT ROLES\*** have a responsibility to co-operate with measures to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination. We will aim to:

* create a culture that respects and values each other’s differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.
* remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to **\*INSERT ORGANISATION’S\*** performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.
* to, where practical, achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local community in which we operate.
* consider diverse representations when creating promotional materials.
* neutralise our language and not favour any particular age, gender or lifestyle in our examples or materials.
* create opportunities in forms and discussions where people can share their pronouns, presentation, sexuality, or other details to allow them to inhabit their identity fully.
* consider cultural festivals and behaviours when planning and creating services / activities to provide maximum benefit to as broad a range of people as possible.

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will also create spaces and opportunities which can encourage and support the growth of healthy, inclusive behaviours including:

**Mindful communication: listen more, talk carefully**

For example, avoid using gender-specific words such as “ladies”, “dudes”, “men”, “guys”.

Listening is important. Do not interrupt. Don’t overtalk. Respect the time of the person in front of you, be attentive and sensitive to what interruption, over-talking and over-splaining may involve.

**Challenge stereotypes**

Unconscious biases, prejudices, lack of information, the influence of the media, and teachings coming from our cultural and social beliefs may all impact the way that we interact with others.

**Avoid assumptions**

Assumptions are a difficult starting point because they take for granted that our audience shares the same requirements and experiences as we do. Although assumptions are often developed unconsciously, it is important to recognize the moment when we apply them in our interactions with others. They can tell us what a person may have experienced or how they may have been treated but we will never know the full story.

**Ask yourself and others (the right) questions**

Asking many questions helps in the process of awareness and discovery of the other, but it is also important to ask the right questions. Asking questions without going beyond our cultural patterns can lead to answers that reproduce the same structures of thought and attitude and so will we will encourage this curiosity to share our knowledge and experiences.

**Be aware of your privileges**

Talking about privileges can be difficult and often very uncomfortable. However, being aware of our privileges is a crucial first step to adopting a more inclusive attitude. Privileges are social, political, and cultural constructions that are translated into hierarchical relationships in our everyday and professional lives. Part of a broader system, these constructions are solidified through structural and institutional dynamics, and they serve to reinforce fabricated societal divisions based on perceived or constructed divisions and/or pretences.

**Be proactive in educating yourself on the topic**

By doing simple research online, you can find many essays, articles, reports, academic and non-academic resources on the topic. There are many social media accounts from people living with discrimination and this can be used to see first-hand the effects of discrimination.

**Stay open, stay curious, and do not fear mistakes**

Becoming and remaining inclusive is a process, not an objective to be achieved. As in all processes, it is important to remain open and curious, to continue looking for opportunities to learn about various topics. To remain open and curious means, above all, to attract people and situations that allow us to challenge (both positively and negatively) our beliefs and our cultural and personal patterns.

IMPLEMENTATION

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination experienced in the course being involved with us.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation’s grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

Some behaviours (for example, sexual assault / harassment) may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter and will be dealt with accordingly.

**Equal Opportunities Policy Monitoring**

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** recognises that the Equity Policy needs to be kept under review to ensure that its principles remain central to the operation and activity of the organisation. Responsibility for ensuring the policy rests with the **\*INSERT POSITION\*** who will conduct an annual review.

**Recruitment Monitoring Forms**

Recruitment monitoring forms are assessed to test the skills rather than characteristics of candidates applying to ensure there is no bias of sex, age, disability or any other discriminating factor.

**Consultation Policy**

Everyone has a say and is encouraged to comment on all aspects of the organisation and this includes equal opportunities matters. All comments and complaints are treated in confidence.

**Premises**

Every effort has been made to ensure that the premises used are as accessible as possible to minimise discrimination. Where appropriate, **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will try to improve facilities further by making reasonable adjustments or purchasing specialist equipment, whilst having regard to the cost and likely use of such adjustments. We will make every effort to communicate what we can and cannot achieve with the resources we have available.

When hiring premises for events, due regard will be given to the accessibility, facilities and suitability of potential venues.

**Purchasing and Supplier Contracts**

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

**FAILURE TO MEET EXPECTED STANDARDS**

If anyone believes that any aspect of equal opportunities law or good practice is not being met or maintained by another person, they should complain using the **INSERT NAME OF GRIEVANCE OR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**. Any **\*INSERT ROLES\*** against whom a complaint is made will be investigated under the **INSERT NAME OF PROBLEM-SOLVING OR DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**.

**\*INSERT ROLES\*** are also requested to monitor the performance of suppliers of goods and services and to inform the **\*INSERT POSITION\*** where there is evidence of a breach of law or good practice, especially if there may be a vicarious liability on **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\***.

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