



**lifeworks**

Learning disability champions

Lifeworks Charity Limited

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy V2.0**

March 2025

Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance, the intranet holds the most recent version of this guidance. Staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.

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Contents		Page
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Our commitment to you	3
3.0	What we expect from you	3
4.0	Discrimination	4
5.0	Different types of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010	4
6.0	Harassment and sexual harassment	5
7.0	Victimisation	5
8.0	Bullying	6
9.0	Equality of opportunity	6
10.0	Disability inclusion	6
11.0	Training	7
Appendix A	Policy Information Chart	8

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1. Our charity is made up of brilliant people. Each of us is unique, whether in terms of our background, personal characteristics, experience, skills or motivations and we value our people for the differences they bring to the charity.

Fostering an inclusive culture helps each of us to benefit from a wider range of these different perspectives, experiences and skills. We believe that this creates a happier, more productive working environment for us all.

Fostering this culture requires continuous dedication. We recognize that in our world, areas of difference—such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or others—can often lead to biases, challenges, and barriers that some may not encounter. When someone embodies multiple areas of difference, these effects can intensify. For instance, the experiences of a Black woman with a disability may differ significantly from those of a Black woman without a disability and from those of a white woman. This perspective on diversity and inclusion is referred to as "intersectionality".

1.2. To support this inclusive culture, this policy:

- Outlines our commitment throughout the employment lifecycle to equality, diversity and inclusion and sets out how we put this commitment into practice;
- Explains the behaviours we expect of our people in support of this commitment;
- Sets out the key steps we take to make our culture as inclusive as possible, including our diversity and inclusion framework and how we ensure equality of opportunity throughout the employment lifecycle.

## **2.0 Our commitment to you**

2.1. We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our organisation but supports wellbeing and enables our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong.

2.2. We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

2.3. We ensure that our recruitment, promotion and retention procedures do not treat people less favourably because of their:

- Disability;
- Gender, gender identity or gender reassignment status;
- Marital status;
- Race, racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Age;
- Civil partnership status;
- Pregnancy or maternity;
- Paternity;
- Educational background;
- Socio-economic background;
- Caring responsibilities.

## **3.0 What we expect from you**

3.1. We expect you, and every one of our people, to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying this policy. Our culture is made in the day-to-day working interactions between us so creating the right environment is a responsibility that we all share.

- 3.2. We expect you to treat your colleagues, service users and third parties fairly and with dignity, trust and respect. Sometimes, this may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute.
- 3.3. By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, you can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.
- 3.4. Any dealings that you have with colleagues, or third parties must be free from any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.
- 3.5. If any of our people is found to have committed, authorised or condoned an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying, we will take action against them including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary procedure.
- 3.6. You should be aware that you can be personally liable for discrimination and harassment.

#### **4.0 Discrimination**

- 4.1. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics. These are:
  - Disability;
  - Sex;
  - Gender reassignment;
  - Marital or civil partnership status;
  - Race;
  - Religion or belief;
  - Sexual orientation;
  - Age; and
  - Pregnancy or maternity.
- 4.2. There are also two specific types of discrimination that apply only to disability: "discrimination arising from disability" and "failing to make reasonable adjustments".
- 4.3. Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may occur directly, indirectly, by association, or by perception.
- 4.4. Discrimination is not always obvious and can be subtle and unconscious. This stems from a person's general assumptions about the abilities, interests and characteristics of a particular group that influences how they treat those people (known as "unconscious bias"). Such assumptions or prejudices may cause them to apply requirements or conditions that put those in particular groups at a disadvantage. Examples include:
  - Steering employees into particular types of work on the basis of stereotypical assumptions without considering the particular attributes and abilities of individuals;
  - Recruiting or promoting individuals into particular roles because of assumptions about the reactions or preferences of other employees or clients; and
  - Using different standards for different groups of employees to judge performance.

#### **5.0 Different types of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010**

- 5.1. **Direct discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that characteristic (for example choosing not to recruit someone because they are disabled and you think they "wouldn't fit in" to the team).

- 5.2. **Indirect discrimination:** Where a policy, procedure or way of working that applies to everyone puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared with people who do not have that characteristic, unless there is a good reason to justify it. An example is introducing a requirement for all staff to finish work at 6pm. It is arguable that female employees, who statistically bear the larger share of childcare responsibilities could be at a disadvantage if the new working hours prevent them from collecting children from school or nursery.
- 5.3. **Associative discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example because their partner is transgender.
- 5.4. **Discrimination by perception:** Treating someone less favourably because you perceive them to have a protected characteristic even if they do not, for example choosing not to promote someone because you mistakenly perceive them to be gay.
- 5.5. **Discrimination arising from disability:** Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with that person's disability and where such treatment is not justified. Examples include:
- Dismissing or failing to pay a bonus to someone because of their disability-related absence; or
  - Disciplining someone for losing their temper where such loss of temper was out of character and was due to severe pain caused by illness\*.
- 5.6. **Failing to make reasonable adjustments:** Employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employer's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failing to comply with this duty is unlawful. Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:
- 5.7.
- Allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague;
  - Changing their working hours or place of work;
  - Adjusting procedures for assessing job candidates; and
  - Modifying disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## 6.0 Harassment and sexual harassment

- 6.1. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:
- Violating someone else's dignity; or
  - Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.
- 6.2. Sexual harassment is:
- Conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
  - Less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

## 7.0 Victimisation

- 7.1. Victimisation is treating another person detrimentally either because that person has made a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or because they have supported someone else who has made such a complaint, for example by giving a witness statement that supports the allegations.

## **8.0 Bullying**

- 8.1. There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient.
- 8.2. Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online or on social media. Bullying may occur at work or outside work.
- 8.3. If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

## **9.0 Equality of opportunity**

### **9.1. Recruitment**

- 9.1.1. We take reasonable and appropriate steps to encourage job applications from as diverse a range of people as possible.
- 9.1.2. Anyone making a decision about recruitment must not discriminate in any way and should have undertaken appropriate diversity and inclusion training.
- 9.1.3. Every decision-maker should challenge themselves, and other members of the recruitment selection panel, to make sure that any stereotypes, unconscious bias or prejudice do not play any part in recruitment decisions.

### **9.2. Career development**

- 9.2.1. Any decision you make relating to a person's promotion or career development must be free from discrimination.
- 9.2.2. We ensure that selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion are reviewed on a regular basis so that there is no discriminatory impact on a certain group.

## **10.0 Disability inclusion**

### **10.1. Recruiting people with a disability**

- 10.1.1. The HR team will consider disability in advance of a recruitment campaign so that advertising, application forms and assessments, arrangements for interviews, job descriptions and employee specifications, and selection criteria are appropriate and as inclusive as possible.
- 10.1.2. We will ask applicants at the outset if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to the recruitment process.

### **10.2. Talking about disability**

- 10.2.1. We understand that some people find it hard to discuss their disabilities and that disability can be invisible.
- 10.2.2. Psychological safety, where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences, is paramount to ensuring disability inclusion.
- 10.2.3. However, this is only possible if we treat people with dignity, trust and respect and we expect everyone to uphold these values.
- 10.2.4. We are committed to challenging ableist language and promoting inclusive communication. Ableist language is language that is negative, inappropriate or offensive

towards people with a disability and may take the form of jokes or "banter". We understand that language is constantly evolving, and what was once considered acceptable may now be considered offensive. We encourage open dialogue and feedback to address ableist language, ensuring that our workplace is inclusive and respectful for all. However, we will take action under our Disciplinary procedure where appropriate.

### **10.3. Reasonable adjustments**

- 10.3.1. If you have a disability, you do not have to tell us. However, we would encourage you to let us know so that we can support you, for example by making reasonable adjustments to aspects of your role, or to our working practices.
- 10.3.2. If you are experiencing difficulties at work because of your disability, please contact your line manager or the HR team to discuss potential reasonable adjustments that may alleviate or minimise such difficulties. We may need to discuss your needs with you and your medical adviser to help us get the right support in place.

### **11.0 Training**

- 11.1. All new employees will complete equality, diversity, and inclusion training as part of their induction process. This training will be repeated every two years.

## Appendix A - Policy Information Chart

<b>Title</b>	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy V2.0
<b>Document purpose/summary</b>	To provide guidance and support on equality, diversity, inclusion & equity and how the Charity supports this.
<b>Owner</b>	HR Manager
<b>Policy Department</b>	HR
<b>Ratification date</b>	March 2025
<b>Review date and frequency</b>	Annually
<b>Consultation process</b>	SLT, Managers
<b>Ratified by</b>	BOT
<b>Target audience</b>	All Lifeworks staff
<b>Circulation</b>	Electronic: Breathe HR Written: Upon request to the Policies Administrator Please contact the Policy Administrator if you require this document in an alternative format.
<b>Equality analysis checklist completed</b>	Yes
<b>References/sources of information</b>	CIPD, Equality Act 2010, GDPR & Data Protection 1998
<b>Associated documentation/cross referenced policies</b>	Recruitment & Selection Policy Grievance Policy Disciplinary Policy Bullying & Harassment Policy Dignity at Work Policy This list is not exhaustive.
<b>Supersedes document</b>	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy V1.1

**Executive approval is subject to the understanding that the policy owner has followed the organisation process for policy ratification.**

## Document review history

Version no.	Type of Change: Major, minor, none or taken out of use	Date	Author of change	Description of change
2.0	Update	December 2018	HR Manager	Re-write of policy
3.0	Update	March 2020	HR Manager	Updated with recommendations from PCC following College Safeguarding Audit
1.0	Rewrite of policy	August 2022	Head of People and Culture	Rewrite & rename of policy
1.1	Minor update	March 2023	Head of P&C	Remove equity and replace with belonging. Update policy title.
2.0	Rewrite and renaming of policy	December 2024	HR Manager	Re-write of policy