

ReachOut

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1. At ReachOut we value every person as an individual, celebrate diversity and believe that embracing differences creates an environment in which everyone can do better. We are committed to working to achieve a more equitable, diverse and inclusive work and volunteer force that is representative of the communities we serve by ensuring EDI is embedded in our policies, practices and our individual behaviours, ensuring that our beneficiaries remain at the forefront of our thinking and decision making.

1.2. Our four Character Strengths of Fairness, Good Judgement, Self-Control and Staying Power are at the heart of what we do. We support our young people to develop these strengths and expect our staff and volunteers to lead by example in demonstrating them. We expect all our people to be accountable for equity, diversity and inclusion at ReachOut.

1.3. This policy sets out how we will treat all volunteers, employees, our beneficiaries and all other stakeholders with dignity, fairness and respect.

1.4. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly without fear or prejudice regardless of race, age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, maternity or pregnancy status, caring responsibilities, social class, religion, belief and irrelevant offending background.

2. What is equity, diversity & inclusion?

2.1. **Equity** is the process of ensuring that all activities and practices are impartial, fair and provide equal possible outcomes for every individual. It is about creating a fairer society, where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination. It is about challenging the environments and processes that limit an individual's opportunities to succeed.

2.2. **Diversity** is the mix of individuals within society and the workplace. It is about recognising, understanding and valuing difference that individuals bring. By embracing these different experiences, skills, ideas, knowledge and abilities we can create an organisation that can achieve the best possible outcomes and opportunities for our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.

2.2. **Inclusion** is about taking deliberate action to create an environment and culture where everyone feels they belong, can participate and is valued for their contribution, experience and perspective. Everyone has a part to play in creating a welcoming and respectful organisation.

3. Purpose and aims

3.1. This policy sets out ReachOut's commitment to:

- A ReachOut that is free from discrimination and prejudice.
- Treat all people, regardless of their background, with dignity and respect – this includes: our people, those with whom we interact (e.g. our young people, delivery partners etc.) and other stakeholders.
- Comply with UK equalities legislation and our other external obligations including: equality standards set by contracts, regulatory requirements, accreditations and good practice schemes.
- Uphold the ReachOut Character Strengths in all activities

- Make our people aware of their responsibilities, and know how and where to seek support to actively uphold and champion equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Ensure that we attract and retain people from the widest possible diversity of backgrounds and experiences to and at all levels of the organisation.
- Actively promote our opportunities to a wide range of diverse communities from all backgrounds to ensure are representatives of the communities we serve
- Ensure robust diversity-related data collection to better understand our people and beneficiaries

3.2. This policy applies to:

- This policy is applicable to all Trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and the general public.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. **The Board of Trustees** are responsible for championing equity, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that the policy is consistent with ReachOut's values and that resources, support and leadership is provided to ensure this policy can be meaningfully implemented.

4.2. **The Chief Executive Officer** is the policy owner and is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fit for purpose and up to date.

4.3. **The Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for championing this policy on behalf of the Board of Trustees and ensuring compliance with policy and the effective development, implementation and monitoring of equity and diversity objectives and related action.

4.4 **Managers** are responsible for implementing the policy and role modelling inclusive behaviour and providing support to their staff and volunteers

4.5. **Our people** are responsible for championing equity, diversity and inclusion, understanding how the policy relates to their role, and reporting cases of discrimination, harassment, and unfair treatment.

4.6. If you believe that you have been discriminated against you should report this to your line manager or the Chief Executive Officer under the grievance procedure. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the Employee Handbook. We take any complaint seriously and you will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

4.7. If you witness what you believe to be discrimination you should report this to your line manager or the Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible.

4.8. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

5. The Law

5.1. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a 'protected characteristic'. The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as being age, disability, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

5.2. Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

5.3. It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user in the provision of services or good or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability.

5.4. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

6. Types of unlawful discrimination

6.1. **Perceptive discrimination** is **direct discrimination** against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person doesn't actually possess that characteristic. An example is not being offered a promotion because you're perceived to be gay / lesbian / transgender. Discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which core to a job role and proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

6.2. **Associative discrimination** is **direct discrimination** against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. An example of associative discrimination is not getting promoted solely because you have a disabled child.

6.3. **Indirect discrimination** can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. An example would be to state that only employees who work full-time are allowed to attend training courses. As more women than men work part-time this would stop more women than men getting training, and so put them at a disadvantage.

6.4. **Victimisation** occurs when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint raised under the Equality Act or because they're suspected of doing so. You are not protected if you've maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

6.5. **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

7. Monitoring and review

7.1. This policy will be monitored regularly to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

7.2. The Senior Management Team will report to the Board of Trustees quarterly on actions undertaken and progress made to improve equity, diversity and inclusion.

7.3. Any information provided by job applicants, employees and volunteers for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

8. Our Key EDI Strategic Priorities for 2021-24

8.1. Work with our colleagues and beneficiaries from under-represented groups to inform good practice

8.2. Build a staff and volunteer force that is more representative of the communities we serve

8.3. Embed equity, diversity and inclusions in all ReachOut's activities through our policies, processes and organisational culture

8.4. The voice of young people - their views and experiences, to play a larger role in shaping our services and processes