

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

May 2025

Review Date: May 2026

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Action4Youth aims to be an inclusive organisation where the individuality of every person is treated with respect. We are committed to eliminating discrimination in any form. This means that all staff, volunteers, trustees and customers will be treated with dignity, equality, fairness and respect and none will receive less favourable treatment.

Action4Youth understands its legal obligations and this policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and all relevant legislations.

To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for everyone and not to discriminate on grounds of the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and National origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Action4Youth will also endeavour to work beyond the Equality Act 2010 with additional groups not specified in the act such as part time workers, carers and ex-offenders, etc.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and to fulfil their potential by taking advantage of training and development opportunities.

We will aim to create equality of accessibility and opportunity.

Employment, promotion and training will be offered on the basis of ability.

Responsibilities

1. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that:

- Action4Youth complies with all relevant legislation relating to equality.
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is maintained, reviewed and published on the company website

- That procedures and strategies related to the Policy are implemented
- They monitor all discriminatory / prejudiced-based incidents and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to all said incidents.

Positive Action

The Board of Trustees recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists. The Board will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action, which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

The Board will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action, which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis.

2. The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team

The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- providing, along with the Board, leadership and vision in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion
- overseeing the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- co-ordinating the activities related to equality, diversity and inclusion
- ensuring that all who work with the company are aware of, and comply with, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support
- taking appropriate action in response to racist incidents, discrimination against persons with a disability and sexual harassment or discrimination against any persons because of their age, sexuality or religion, gender, belief / non-belief
- keeping up to date with equality legislation by attending training.

3. Staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- not discriminating on grounds of race, disability, or other equality protected characteristics;
- keeping up to date with equality legislation by attending training.

Eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and celebrating diversity

1. Staff recruitment and professional development

Action4Youth will:

- ensure that all posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants
- ensure that all those involved in recruitment and selection are aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice throughout the recruitment and selection process
- monitor access to opportunities for professional development on equality grounds.
- ensure that equality policies and practices are covered in all staff induction
- ensure all volunteers are made aware of equality policies and practices.

- ensure all staff and volunteers receive equality training which is renewed every three years
- minimise direct, indirect and institutional discrimination with regards to staff recruitment, training and retention
- ensure that the workforce at all levels takes account of local diversity in terms of age, race, gender, ability, faith, ethnicity, social condition, cultural background and sexual orientation, as far as possible.

2. Partnerships with service users and communities

Action4Youth will:

- emphasise the equal contribution to society of members from different backgrounds with various lifestyles and identities
- improve perceptions about efficiency, efficacy and fairness of service provision at local level
- increase the sense of responsibility and reciprocity between and within groups and persons
- promote understanding and recognition of overlapped and interconnected sources of identity for persons and groups
- foster positive relationships between and within groups of staff and volunteers.
- facilitate meaningful and continuous interaction between and within members of different groups
- establish and strengthen effective approaches to monitor, evaluate, manage and prevent conflict.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Action4Youth has a rolling programme for reviewing our policies. When policies are reviewed, the Board will endeavour to ensure that due regard is given to the promotion of all aspects of equality within each policy.

Impact Assessments and how this policy relates to other policies

Action4Youth will ensure that the commitments embodied in this policy apply to the full range of our policies and practices, especially those concerned with:

- equal opportunities
- staff recruitment and retention
- staff training and professional development
- partnerships with other organisations and communities
- visits and visitors.

Each policy, and any other relevant policies as outlined in the specific duties placed upon us by the relevant legislation, will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on the different groups that make up Action4Youth as and when they are due for review.

Appendix One

Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them or harassment because of perception or association.

Action4Youth is committed to the principles of dignity at work for all its staff. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues. Action4Youth will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the company. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

The company has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. The Board is committed to having any such complaint investigated. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. The first point of contact for any such complaint should be the Chief Executive. In addition, staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support.

Appendix Two

Definitions of Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 describes certain forms of discrimination. All staff and volunteers should be aware of the various forms of discrimination.

They are:-

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances because of a protected characteristic.

For example: Paul, a senior manager, turns down Jenny's application for promotion to a supervisor position. Jenny who is a lesbian, learns that Paul did this because he believes the team she applied to manage are homophobic. Paul thought that Jenny's sexual orientation would prevent

her from gaining the team's respect and managing them effectively. This is direct sexual orientation discrimination against Jenny.

Perceptive discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

For example: Jim is 45 but looks much younger. Many people assume that he is in his mid-20's. He is not allowed to represent the company at an international meeting because the Managing Director thinks that he is too young. Jim has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic.

Associative discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses any one or more of the protected characteristics.

For example: June works as a project manager and is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after she tells her boss that her mother, who lives at home, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination against June because of her association with her disabled mother.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can happen when there is a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Employers can only justify indirect discrimination if they can show that they acted fairly and reasonably in managing their business (e.g. in order to achieve a legitimate aim) and they would need to show that they had considered other, less discriminatory alternatives. Like direct discrimination, indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not, unless it can be fully justified.

For example: A small finance company needs its staff to work late on a Friday afternoon to analyse stock prices in the American finance market. The figures arrive late on Friday because of the global time differences. During the winter some staff would like to be released early on Friday afternoon in order to be home before sunset – a requirement of their religion. They propose to make the time up later during the remainder of the week. The company is not able to agree to this request because the American figures are necessary to the business, they need to be worked on immediately and the company is too small to have anyone else able to do the work.

The requirement to work on Friday afternoons is not unlawful indirect discrimination as it meets a legitimate business aim and there is no alternative means available.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that disabled people have, as far as is reasonable, the same access to everything that is involved in getting and doing a job as a non-disabled person. This may mean changing the way in which employment is structured, the removal of physical barriers and/or providing extra support for a disabled worker or job applicant.

The employer is under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove or reduce or prevent the obstacles that face a disabled worker or job applicant.

The employer only has to make adjustments where they are aware – or should reasonably be aware – that someone has a disability.

Many of the adjustments your employer can make will not be particularly expensive, and they are not required to do more than it is reasonable for them to do.

Discrimination arising from a disability

It is discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with a disability – very closely linked to indirect discrimination. (e.g. a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia). It is unlawful where the employer knows or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability.

Victimisation

Victimisation is when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

For example: Anne makes a formal complaint against her manager because she feels that she has been discriminated against because of marriage. Although the complaint is resolved through the organisation's grievance procedures, Anne is subsequently ostracised by her colleagues, including her manager. She could claim victimisation.

For example: Lydia is pregnant and works at a call centre. The manager knows that Lydia is pregnant but still disciplines her for taking too many toilet breaks as he would for any other member of staff. This is discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity as this characteristic doesn't require the normal comparison of treatment with other employees.

Harassment

The law defines harassment as "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."

For example: Peter is disabled and is claiming harassment against his line manager after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability. Richard shares an office with Peter and he too is claiming harassment, even though he is not disabled, as the manager's behaviour has also created an offensive environment for him.

Sexual harassment

This is unwanted behaviour which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. A person should not be treated less favourably because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

For example: Steve is continually being called gay and other related names by a group of employees at his work. Homophobic comments have been posted on the staff notice board about him by people from this group. Steve was recently pushed to the floor by one member of the group but is too scared to take action. Steve is not gay but heterosexual; furthermore the group know he isn't gay. This is harassment because of sexual orientation.

Whistle blowing

There may be occasions where staff or volunteers feel that colleagues are not following the Equality and Diversity Policy and their behaviour or attitudes are questionable. Those making a complaint in good faith will be given a full, fair and sensitive hearing and may do so without fear of subsequent victimisation.