

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Staff Policy



Approved by:	CEO	Date: 09/12/2024
Last reviewed on:	27/04/2026	
Next review due by:	27/04/2027	

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Staff Policy

Releasing Potential is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

1. Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1.1 Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time

1.2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of 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
- sex
- sexual orientation

1.3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes:

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy
- leave for parents
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

2. Neurodiversity and Inclusion

Purpose and intent

The purpose of this is to guide staff and volunteers (including Governors and Trustees) in their work, including overseeing work carried out on our behalf by others such as consultants and suppliers.

Context

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways the brain may work and interpret information. It highlights that people think about things differently. We have different interests, motivations, and natural strengths.

Most people are neurotypical, meaning that the brain functions and processes information in the way society expects – sometimes also described as allistic. Many day-to-day tasks are designed in a ‘neurotypical’ way and therefore these may have an impact on someone who is ‘neurodivergent’.

However, it is estimated that around one in seven people (more than 15% of people in the UK) are neurodivergent, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information differently. Neurodivergence includes (and is not limited to) Attention Deficit Disorders, Autism, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.

Types of Neurodivergence

Most forms of neurodivergence are experienced along a ‘spectrum’. Each form of neurodivergence (such as dyslexia and autism) has a range of associated characteristics and these can vary from individual to individual. For example, the effects of dyspraxia on one person can be different to another person who also has dyspraxia. The effects on the individual can also change over time.

An individual will often have the characteristics of more than one type of neurodivergence. It is therefore important that people are not stereotyped according to the better-known characteristics.

It is still helpful to have an awareness of some of the indicative traits that each type of neurodivergence can have – and to recognise that it is not uncommon for different types to be professionally diagnosed together or to have overlaps in characteristics.

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders)

It is estimated that about 4% of the UK population have ADHD. It affects the person’s ability to control attention, impulses and concentration, and can cause inattention, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

Dyspraxia (also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder)

It is estimated that up to 5% of the UK population are dyspraxic. It relates to issues with physical co-ordination, and for most, organisation of thought.

Dyslexia

It is estimated that 10% of the UK population are dyslexic. It is a language processing difficulty that can cause problems with aspects of reading, writing and spelling.

Autism (which includes Asperger's Syndrome)

It is estimated that about 1-2% of the UK population are autistic. It impacts how a person perceives the world and interacts with others, making it difficult for them to pick up social cues and interpret them.

Principles

- Everyone deserves opportunities, encouragement and support to realise their full potential
- A diversity of cognitive approaches is a source of great strength and value within a genuinely inclusive workplace
- All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that policies, practices and culture do not discriminate against neurodivergent people
- Staff members must not be subject to unfavourable treatment if they choose to disclose a neurodivergent condition
- Each person is unique and there can be a high degree of overlap between neurodivergent conditions. Any support needs identified and implemented must be on the basis of personal evaluation and individual consultation – not assumptions or stereotypes

3.1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense

3.2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes informing managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their

employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public

3.3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

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

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

3.4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

3.5. Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

3.6. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

3.7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

4. Agreement to follow this policy

This equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by The Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team.

5. Links to other policies

[Dignity At Work Policy .09.12.24docx.docx](#)

[Staff code of conduct .docx](#)