



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for Employees

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1. Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 The Trust is committed to creating a workplace culture in which all staff are treated with dignity, fairness and respect, and in which discrimination, harassment and victimisation are not tolerated under any circumstances.
- 1.2 The Trust recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity
 - foster good relations between individuals and groups
- 1.3 The Trust is committed not only to preventing discrimination, but to actively promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. We aim to identify and remove barriers that may disadvantage individuals or groups and ensure all staff are able to contribute fully and achieve their potential.
- 1.4 The Trust will take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including identifying risks, implementing preventative measures, and monitoring outcomes to ensure effectiveness.
- 1.5 The Trust is committed to fostering a culture in which staff feel safe, supported and confident to raise concerns about unfair treatment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour.

2. Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels within the Trust, including trustees, governors, leaders, employees, contractors, agency workers, volunteers and applicants.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, training, promotion, pay, performance management, conduct, disciplinary and grievance procedures and termination of employment.
- 2.3 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - ensure compliance with equality legislation
 - promote fairness, equity and inclusion
 - support a positive and inclusive working culture
 - set clear expectations of behaviour

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with equality legislation and the effective operation of this policy.
- 3.2 Leaders and managers must:
 - lead by example and promote inclusive behaviours
 - challenge inappropriate conduct
 - ensure fair and consistent decision-making

- seek HR advice where required
- 3.3 All staff must:
- treat others with dignity and respect
 - avoid discriminatory behaviour
 - support an inclusive workplace culture
 - raise concerns where appropriate
- 3.4 The Trust will provide training for staff and managers, including awareness of:
- equality legislation
 - discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - unconscious bias and its impact on decision-making
 - inclusive behaviours and leadership

4. Forms of discrimination

- 4.1 Discrimination, whether direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional, is prohibited.
- 4.2 This policy covers the following protected characteristics:
- age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- 4.3 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
- **Direct discrimination** – treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
 - **Indirect discrimination** – applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages a particular group more than others without justification. For example, requiring a job to be done full time rather than part time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
 - **Harassment** – this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.
 - **Victimisation** – treating someone detrimentally because they have made or supported a complaint or raised concerns about discrimination or harassment, including where this is based on a mistaken belief.

- **Disability discrimination** – includes less favourable treatment because of a disability and failure to make reasonable adjustments where required.

4.4 Discrimination can also occur:

- **by association** (because of someone's connection to a person with a protected characteristic)
- **by perception** (because of a belief that someone has a protected characteristic)

4.5 Examples of inappropriate behaviour may include offensive comments, exclusion from opportunities, assumptions about an individual's abilities, or decisions based on stereotypes.

4.6 The Trust will take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, including harassment by third parties.

4.7 Third-party harassment (for example from parents, carers, visitors or contractors) will not be tolerated. The Trust will take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour and will take appropriate action where concerns arise

5. Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Recruitment, promotion and selection will be conducted on the basis of merit against objective criteria. Individuals will be assessed on the basis of their relevant skills, experience and abilities.

5.2 The Trust will take steps, where appropriate, to promote a diverse workforce and ensure equality of opportunity. No individual will be disadvantaged in recruitment or selection for reasons unrelated to their ability to perform the role.

5.3 Recruitment processes will:

- avoid bias and discrimination
- use inclusive language and avoid stereotyping
- involve more than one assessor where possible

The Trust will take reasonable steps to ensure vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential applicants.

Our recruitment processes are set out in the Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy.

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5.5 Applicants will not be asked inappropriate questions relating to protected characteristics, except where permitted by law. For example, questions relating to health or disability will only be asked where necessary and lawful.

5.6 The Trust will not make assumptions about an applicant's suitability based on personal characteristics such as appearance, name or background.

- 5.7 The Trust will monitor diversity data to identify underrepresentation or disadvantage and inform improvement actions. Provision of this information is voluntary and will not adversely affect recruitment decisions.

6. Training, Promotion and Conditions of Service

- 6.1 All staff will have fair access to training, development and progression opportunities.
- 6.2 Decisions relating to pay, promotion and development will be based on merit, skills and performance.
- 6.3 The Trust will regularly review its practices to ensure there are no unjustified barriers to progression
- 6.4 Where appropriate, the Trust will take steps to support underrepresented or disadvantaged groups and improve equality of access to opportunities.

7. Termination of Employment

- 7.1 Redundancy processes will be conducted fairly, using objective and non-discriminatory criteria.
- 7.2 Disciplinary procedures will be applied consistently and without discrimination.

8. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

- 8.1 The Trust is committed to supporting staff with disabilities.
- 8.2 Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by disabled staff.
- 8.3 If staff experience difficulties at work because of a disability, they are encouraged to discuss their needs so that appropriate adjustments can be considered. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

9. Raising Concerns and Breaches of Policy

- 9.1 Staff who experience or witness discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment are encouraged to raise concerns.
- 9.2 Concerns may be raised through:
- line management
 - HR
 - the grievance procedure
 - the Trust's anti-harassment procedures
- 9.3 All concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively and confidentially.

- 9.4 Individuals who raise concerns in good faith will not be subjected to victimisation or retaliation.
- 9.5 Where allegations are substantiated, appropriate action will be taken, which may include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- 9.6 Deliberately false or malicious allegations may also result in disciplinary action.

10. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

10.1 The Trust will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:

- workforce data analysis
- monitoring recruitment, promotion and outcomes
- review of complaints and investigations

10.2 Monitoring will be used to:

- identify trends or inequalities
- address barriers and improve practice
- target training and support

10.3 The Trust will, where appropriate, share progress against equality objectives with staff and use this information to inform ongoing improvements.

10.4 This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains legally compliant and reflects current best practice.

11. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Flexible Working Policy