

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) POLICY

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2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Neurodivergence Project is committed to creating a service where equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are integral to our operations.

We value and promote an inclusive environment where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Our aim is to attract, develop, and retain a diverse team. We aim to ensure that everyone feels valued, respected, and supported, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

We are committed to the principle of treating all of our team, beneficiaries, and applicants equally, as well as providing reasonable adjustments to provide equality of opportunity to disabled team members. We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of managing our teams including recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay, benefits, terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

It is the policy of the Charity to take all reasonable steps to develop and promote people on the basis of their abilities and qualifications without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. In this policy, these are known as the 'protected characteristics'.

We will always appoint, train, develop and promote team members on the basis of merit and ability alone.



3. SCOPE

This policy applies to the conduct of all team members in the workplace and also to team member's conduct outside of the workplace that is related to our work, including conduct at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues. This policy also applies to team members conduct outside of work which may impact on the Charity's reputation, including the expression of views on social media which are contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to the Charity.

4. TEAM MEMBER'S DUTIES

Team members have a duty to co-operate with the Charity to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and to prevent discrimination and harassment. Action under the charities disciplinary procedure will be taken against any team member who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the EDI policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the team member liable to summary dismissal/the termination of their contract with the Charity.

Team members should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.

Team members must not harass, bully or intimidate other team members for reasons related to one or more of the protected characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the Charities disciplinary procedure. Team members who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence. The Charity has a separate dignity at work policy which deals with these issues and sets out how complaints of this type will be dealt with.



Team members should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices. Alternatively, team members may decide to raise these concerns with another colleague in a relevant position of seniority, or to raise the matter through the Charity's Grievance Procedure. Team members must not victimise or retaliate against a team member who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who has provided information about such discrimination. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the Charity's disciplinary procedure. Team members should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

5. MANAGERS' DUTIES

Managers must ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the Charity's aims and objectives set out in this policy with regard to EDI. Managers are also responsible for identifying and addressing any behaviours or processes that conflict with this policy. Managers will be given appropriate training on EDI awareness from time to time.

6. DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics, a job applicant or a team member is treated less favourably than other job applicants or team members are treated or would be treated.

The treatment will still amount to direct discrimination even if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the job applicant or team member is associated and not on the job applicant's or team member's own protected characteristic. In addition, it can include cases where it is perceived that a job applicant or a team member has a particular protected characteristic when in fact they do not.



Discrimination after working with the charity is also unlawful if it arises out of and is closely connected to the working relationship, for example refusing to give a reference or providing an unfavourable reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of employment.

7. INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all job applicants or team members, but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial group.

Indirect discrimination occurs, when applied to applicants or team members, when a Provision, Criterion or Practice (PCP) which is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the applicant's or team member's.

A PCP is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the applicant or team member's if:

- It is applied, or would be applied, to persons with whom the applicant or team member does not share the protected characteristic
- The PCP puts, or would put, persons with whom the applicant or team member shares the protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom the applicant or team member does not share it
- It puts, or would put, the applicant or team member at that disadvantage
- It cannot be shown by the Charity to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.



The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of its management of team members and beneficiaries.

8. 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. The Neurodivergence Project applies this principle to all team members, whether freelance or volunteers.

Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:

- 🦋 allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague;
- 🦋 changing their working hours or place of work;
- 🦋 adjusting procedures for assessing applicants
- 🦋 modifying disciplinary and grievance procedures.

The Charity will put in place reasonable adjustments for disabled team members and recruits in all aspects of engagement and recruitment in compliance with its statutory duty where the Charity is aware the team member or applicant is disabled.



9. HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:

- 👤 violating someone else's dignity
- 👤 creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.

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.

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate harassment based on a protected characteristic and sexual harassment.

10.VICTIMISATION

Victimisation occurs when a team member is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because they have raised or supported a grievance or complaint of unlawful discrimination, or they have given evidence in connection with unlawful discrimination proceedings brought by another team member. However, a team member is not protected if they give false evidence or information, or make a false allegation, and they do so in bad faith. Post-engagement victimisation is also unlawful, for example refusing to give a reference or providing an unfavourable reference because the former team member has done one of the protected acts set out above.



The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate victimisation in all aspects of engagement with the Charity.

11. SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of abilities and qualifications. The Charity is committed to applying its EDI at all stages of safe recruitment and selection practices.

Advertisements

Advertisements will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people. Advertisements will avoid stereotyping or language or criteria that may discourage particular groups from applying. When advertising vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, the Charity will, as far as reasonably practicable:

1. Ensure advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic;
2. Avoid setting any unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of people with a particular protected characteristic.
3. Offer flexible working arrangements where possible under the Charity's flexible working policy to ensure that we do not unintentionally exclude any group of candidates.



Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible team members in such a way that they do not restrict applications from team members with a particular protected characteristic.

However, where, having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular protected characteristic is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, the Charity will apply that requirement to the job role and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

12. SELECTION METHODS

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all opportunities at all levels.

The selection of new team members will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specifications and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job.

With disabled job applicants, the Charity will have regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria or practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.



Selection tests

Any selection tests which are used will be limited to questions relating to the particular role and/or career requirements. The tests will measure the individual's actual or inherent ability to do or to train for the work or career. Thus, questions or exercises on matters which may be unfamiliar to applicants with a particular protected characteristic will not be included in the tests if they are unrelated to the requirements of the particular role. The tests which are used will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.

13.APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWING

All applications will be processed in the same way. The team responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application.

Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job. Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.



Questions about disability and health

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before an offer to join the team is made. There are limited exceptions to this. For example:

- a) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the role (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- b) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- c) Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- d) Equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, invitations and offers to join the team can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the role (for example, if the role involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

Training, transfer and promotion

The Charity will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with the Charity's policy on EDI, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the areas for which they are



responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

The Charity will also provide training to all team members to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the Charity's equality, diversity and inclusion and dignity at work policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new team members, team members for training or team members for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of team members who predominantly have a particular protected characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, the Charity's systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of engagement, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of engagement, benefits, facilities and services will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination because of one or more of the protected characteristics.



Equal pay and equality of terms

The Charity is committed to equal pay and equality of terms in employment. It believes its male and female team members should receive equal pay where they are carrying out like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the Charity will endeavour to maintain a system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

14.GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

All allegations of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. The Charity will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints about unlawful discrimination from Team members. Such complaints should be raised promptly under the terms of the Charity's grievance procedure.

If the complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

Team members will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint was both untrue and made in bad faith.

15.MONITORING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Charity will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel practices and procedures in order to assess whether equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace is being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its standard working practices. If changes are required, the Charity will implement them. The Charity will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome substantial disadvantages caused by disability.



Provision of information by job applicants and team members regarding a protected characteristic is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information regarding protected characteristics, including in any EDI monitoring form, is stored confidentially and kept separate from applications before shortlisting. This information will be used solely by the Charity for the purpose of EDI monitoring. Reviewing this data helps the Charity to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every 2 years, and when there are changes in legislation.

To be reviewed before 31.12.27