

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Last update: January 2025

Approved by the board of trustees 20 February 2025

Next review date: February 2028

This policy should be ready in conjunction with our Recruitment Policy, Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, Volunteer Policy and Employee Handbook.



Background

This policy outlines Eastside Community Trust's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and fair treatment, and it applies to staff, volunteers, trustees, freelance contractors and beneficiaries of the charity. The policy applies across the range of Eastside Community Trust's employment policies and practices, including those relating to recruitment, disciplinary and grievance, harassment and complaints.

It addresses the ways in which Eastside Community Trust will promote and celebrate diversity, specifically aiming to develop community cohesion, and to work in an inclusive and welcoming way with all members of the local community.

Legal framework

The legal framework for this policy is the Equality Act 2010 and its Codes of Practice. The policy applies specifically, but not exclusively, to addressing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in respect of the named 'characteristics' in the Act:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or beliefs
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Eastside Community Trust will also take all reasonable steps to ensure that it and its staff do not unlawfully discriminate under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 2017; Employment Rights Act

1996; Human Rights Act 1998 and any other relevant legislation in force from time to time relating to discrimination in employment and the provision of facilities or services.

Guiding principles

We want to develop an organisation based on the principles of social justice, of which equity diversity and inclusion play a fundamental part. We value our staff, volunteers, trustees and the local communities in which we work and we expect them to be treated in a respectful manner. Accordingly, we all have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. Throughout the organisation and in our work in the neighbourhoods, we aim to:

- Promote equity;
- Celebrate and value diversity;
- Advocate that the diversity of the area is an asset;
- Advocate for a culture of understanding between different communities from different backgrounds and to promote community cohesion;
- Champion equity and anti-discrimination work;
- Model best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate process at team and board level.

We will provide equality of opportunity and fair treatment as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.

We represent many different equalities groups. We also recognise that certain groups and individuals in society are oppressed and disadvantaged due to discrimination directed against them. We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to the work of our organisation and the community in which they live.

We recognise that it is not enough to just abide by the law relating to equity, diversity and inclusion, but that we need to constantly review and monitor our employment practices and service delivery and then ensure we are taking positive action to address any under-representation and to remove any barriers that prevent participation by different groups.

We will not only address the protected characteristics of the Equality Act but will also address discrimination, and encourage participation on other grounds for example class, age, socio-economic background or immigration status to ensure that our employment and services promote equality of opportunity.

We recognise that treating everyone the same is not an action that will lead to equity, as many people face historic oppression or discrimination, and so we will always work to meet the individual needs of employees and people who use our services to support their inclusion within the limits of our resources and capacity.

Although the law does not cover unconscious bias and stereotyping, we will seek to address our own prejudices and challenge the prejudicial views of others. We will provide support and training to staff to develop learning culture around our own prejudices.

We recognise that there are environmental, informational and attitudinal barriers that prevent particular groups from accessing our services (e.g. Disabled people, people who do not have English as a first language), and whenever possible we will work with members of those groups to identify and address those barriers.

We understand the difference between integration (which is expecting people to 'fit in' to the way we work) and inclusion, which is adapting our ways of working to meet everyone's needs and we will base our service delivery on inclusive practices.

We aim to challenge any racism or other systemic issues and to address discriminatory practices that are identified, and to support employees and people who use services to challenge harassment and hate crime.

We will support our staff, volunteers and trustees in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from colleagues, other organisations or members of the community.

We recognise it is not enough to tolerate diversity, so we wish to celebrate the rich culture and wide range of backgrounds of the people who live in our area.

We will design our services to improve understanding of difference and to reduce any community tensions, improve relations between groups with protected characteristics, and to promote community cohesion.

As a provider of services, we recognise we have a particular responsibility to make any events we organise or host as inclusive as possible, meeting the wide range of access needs of local people.

We recognise that we need to have processes in place to hear the views of people from the wide range of backgrounds on our services, so that their lived experience can inform our strategy and actions.

We recognise the need to develop partnerships with organisations of people with lived experience to benefit from their expertise and to ensure we are reaching the widest range of local people.

We particularly recognise that young people are excluded from decision making and from determining their futures and see their participation and empowerment as a key part of our vision.

Definitions

Eastside Community Trust's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

- **Direct discrimination** - where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** – when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- **Associative discrimination** – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- **Perceptive discrimination** - direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- **Third party harassment** – potential liability for the harassment of staff by others.
- **Victimisation** – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or it is thought that they have done so.
- **Positive discrimination**- treating people with particular protected characteristics more favourably than others. Whilst we recognise that some forms of positive discrimination are unlawful, we will use positive discrimination where allowed and beneficial
- **Positive action** - encouraging people from under-represented groups to apply for roles or to access services through specific actions. We will take positive action to address an under-representation or inequality in outcomes for staff, volunteers, trustees or people who use our services.

- **Reasonable adjustments** - making changes to information or the physical environment to make it more accessible to disabled people. We will make reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs and remove barriers for any disabled staff, volunteers, trustees or people who use our services. However, we also recognise that under the Equality Act this is an 'anticipatory duty', so we will plan to make all of our events and services as accessible as possible.

Language and equalities

We recognise that language around equalities changes as understanding evolves. As a principle, we will use the terminology to describe people with different protected characteristics that is preferred by those people themselves, as advocated by their representative groups.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and trustees to adhere to, and to proactively implement this policy. We also expect them to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy.
- Understand and value equity, diversity and inclusion and to keep up to date with relevant training and research as part of their professional and personal development.
- Raise any concerns about discrimination, harassment or bullying or other breaches of the policy with their line manager or the CEO.
- Promote the inclusion of the widest range of people in their activities.
- Promote good relations between people from different groups.
- Work in a way that demonstrates their commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

We also expect anyone who uses our services, contracts with, visits or partners with us to act within this guidance.

Responsibility for ensuring the intent within this policy is embedded in our culture and practice lies with the trustees. Day to day responsibility for the implementation of the policy is delegated to the CEO. Line managers will be responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to in relation to their teams, volunteers and any recruitment processes. They should create a safe and fair working environment where equity, diversity and inclusion is regularly discussed and discrimination is challenged. They should also act as a positive role model in terms of best practice.