

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

How are our values demonstrated/supported through this policy?	We welcome all – this policy aims to ensure YMCA DLG is a space where people feel secure, respected, heard, and valued.
	We support – this policy outlines how we support and work to overcome barriers to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) which affect our employees’ and service users’ lives and experiences.
	We inspire – this policy demonstrates our commitment to celebrate representation within the workforce and the communities we serve by inspiring everyone to realise their full potential in all that they do.
	We speak out – this policy makes it clear we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination and harassment.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion implications of this policy	This policy sets out our position on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the workplace and in the settings our services are provided in.
Policy Owner	Head of People (and designated Equal Opportunities Officer)
Version Control Review Information	<p>Version number: 07 (see page 7 for version control information)</p> <p>First published: August 2011</p> <p>Reviewed: June 2014, December 2016, June 2018, November 2019, June 2020, February 2023</p> <p>Next Review Date: February 2024</p>

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 In fulfilling our role as a supported housing, therapeutic services, and targeted youth services provider, and as an employer, YMCA DownsLink Group (YMCA DLG) is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all, in challenging inequality and discrimination, particularly in relation to minoritised and socially excluded groups.
- 1.2 We are committed to ensuring we have effective policies, strategies, procedures, and processes that create an atmosphere which is free from prejudice, discriminatory behaviour, and fear of harassment.
- 1.3 Our organisational **value** – *we welcome all* – drives this commitment, alongside our **Code of Conduct**, breaking down the barriers to access to ensure that everyone can thrive. Our **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan** specifies objectives and actions that give meaning to the principles and commitments laid down in this policy.
- 1.4 YMCA DLG ensures that we treat all individuals with **protected characteristics** and characteristics not protected by law fairly regardless of, but not limited to, **age, disability and neurodiversity, religion and belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation**, appearance, mental or physical health issues not covered by law,



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ethnicity, geographical location, housing, language and communication barriers, caring/dependents status, socio-economic status, immigration status, offending background, spirituality, and gender identity (as defined by the individual, not law), or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

- 1.5 No individual will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their personal or social characteristics, and we will take steps to identify and proactively challenge any form of discrimination.
- 1.6 YMCA DLG is committed to continuous improvement and our goal is to seek a certificate of achievement for the international standard ISO 30415 in Human Resources Management: Diversity and inclusion by 2025.
- 1.7 For a glossary of terms used in this policy, see the appendix.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, partners, visitors as well as the residents and clients who use our services, referred to in this policy as 'service users'.

2.1 Our Christian Ethos

As an organisation with a Christian ethos, YMCA DLG has some designated paid/unpaid posts for which there is an Occupational Requirement for the post-holder to demonstrate a clear commitment to the Christian faith. This would be for reasons of providing spiritual leadership and/or maintaining the Christian ethos of the organisation and would include the Lead Chaplain, and our trustees. For all other post holders, there is an expectation to respect our Christian ethos and uphold its values. We recognise that many of the Christian values we uphold are also represented in other faiths and held by those without faith. To these other posts, we welcome those of other faiths and those of none.

3.0 Policy Principles

- 3.1 All individuals are of equal value, irrespective of their background. Diversity is a strength which should be recognised, respected, and celebrated by all.
- 3.2 Equal value and dignity for an individual does not mean treating everyone in the same way. All individuals deserve to thrive and that is why we have chosen to use the term 'equity' over 'equality', meaning we will sometimes need to undertake positive action to address inequalities to achieve equality of value and opportunity.
- 3.3 Positive attitudes and relationships must be fostered between colleagues, groups, and communities who differ from each other. Our aim is to nurture a shared sense of inclusion and belonging in our YMCA.
- 3.4 Our service users are the best judges of their needs, and we should ensure they have clear and effective ways they can tell us about what they want from our services, which may include a 'you said, we did' approach, community consultations, or surveys, as examples.
- 3.5 Our employees and volunteers deserve to feel valued and have access to safe, supportive, inclusive spaces for those with shared protected characteristics and those who do not.
- 3.6 Our buildings, programmes and services should be, as far as reasonably possible, welcoming, and accessible to all.
- 3.7 Reasonable adjustments must be made to support people with differences and to overcome barriers to working, volunteering and governance, and whilst using our services so we can focus on improving outcomes that enhance individuals and help them reach their potential.

4.0 Commitments to creating an inclusive workforce

- 4.1 YMCA DLG is an equal opportunities employer. Equal treatment applies to all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of work, promotions and career development, reward and recognition, learning and development, and redundancy and redeployment.

- 4.2 We value diversity and believe it takes all types of individuals to make a creative and innovative organisation, especially those that have lived experienced of social exclusion, marginalisation, or under-representation. We look to attract, recruit, develop and retain talented people from all backgrounds at every level of the organisation, to draw on different perspectives and experiences that add value to the way we operate.
- 4.3 We believe that everyone, regardless of their differences, should have access to the same chances and we therefore actively promote equity of opportunity.
- 4.4 We promote inclusion and encourage different ways of thinking to challenge the status quo. We encourage participation so that everyone feels valued, respected, and involved.
- 4.5 We look to create a safe environment for employees to disclose disabilities (visible and non-visible) so that implementation of appropriate workplace adjustments, as far as is reasonably possible, can be tailored to individual needs.
- 4.6 We acknowledge that employees have commitments outside work (e.g., families and caring responsibilities) and we are committed to helping employees fulfil their potential at work whilst finding the right work/life balance.
- 4.7 As part of our employee and volunteer induction programme, we ensure individuals are aware of our values, including *We welcome all*, and the policies and procedures that support our EDI principles.
- 4.8 We are committed to ensuring our workforce understands the impact of discrimination and harassment, how to avoid it and any other actions which might undermine the principles in this policy. We provide induction training, refresher training, and specific training (LGBTQU+, anti-racism), as well as access to a range of development resources via our intranet MACY and our learning and development portal.
- 4.9 We provide regular communication regarding our approach to EDI, outlining our priorities and identifying our actions.
- 4.10 We promote an organisational culture where any individual can speak up if they experience, or witness, any form of discrimination or harassment. See section 8.
- 4.11 We welcome respectful, constructive, and professional challenge at all levels, across job roles and levels, if you believe that we could do better.
- 4.12 We anonymously monitor the composition of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, and disability and neurodiversity. We prioritise these areas in the first instance and act accordingly in terms of positive action and reporting.
- 4.13 We are committed to consistently reviewing our policies and practices to ensure they uphold our EDI principles and take account of changes in the law.

5.0 Commitments to creating inclusive programmes and services

- 5.1 YMCA DLG is committed to ensuring our programmes and services are relevant and accessible to the communities we serve.
- 5.2 We aim to create trauma-informed environments in our services based on safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and an understanding of the impact of cultural, historical, and gender issues.
- 5.3 All individuals who use our services and take part in our programmes will be treated equitably, with courtesy and respect.
- 5.4 We value everyone for who they are and recognise differences, so individuals feel understood and accepted whatever their ability or background.
- 5.5 We believe we can become more inclusive by increasing our ability to understand the needs of service users from marginalised and minoritised communities, those we already work with and those who we do not.
- 5.6 We look to work in partnership with other providers to support under-served groups and build effective relationships within wider marginalised and minoritised communities.

- 5.7 We undertake regular Resident and Client Voice surveys to collect information on service user satisfaction, safety, and comfort within our settings. Such data helps us ensure all service users feel able to participate fully in our pathways to independence, and progress towards their goals.
- 5.8 We assess the impact on equity, diversity, and inclusion during our service development process and continuously look to improve our programmes and services to ensure service users with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged.

6.0 Commitment to allyship in the workplace

YMCA DLG promotes inclusion by educating employees and volunteers on the importance of allyship. Through training and access to information, everyone is encouraged to:

- **recognise the advantages of privilege** and accept that you may have benefited from privileges that are inaccessible to people from marginalised and minoritised communities.
- **be ready to be vulnerable** by accepting truths outside of your own lived experience, reflecting on your own biases, and speaking up when no one else will.
- **be curious** by informing yourself at every opportunity of the realities of inequality so that we do not suppress or neglect what is distinctive in the lives and experiences of those from marginalised and minoritised backgrounds.
- **examine your own service or function policies or processes** and where you could be doing better and take action.
- **be an active bystander** by calling out microaggressions and asking tough questions.
- **bring diverse people to the decision-making table**, engaging them in decision-making processes to ensure their unique perspective is heard and valued.
- **get comfortable talking about equity, diversity, and inclusion**. Strive to educate yourself about the historical, social, and cultural aspects of different characteristics, including the discrimination that individuals are likely to have experienced.
- **Support recruitment, progression, and leadership** of employees from marginalised and minoritised communities.

7.0 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 This Policy is supported by an [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Action Plan](#) and performance against this is monitored by the Board of Trustees at least twice a year against agreed performance indicators.
- 7.2 Responsibility for implementing the EDI Action Plan rests with the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Forum](#), which is open to all service users, employees, and volunteers. The Director of People and Culture, who chairs the EDI Forum, is accountable for delivery of the EDI Action Plan.
- 7.3 To monitor the effectiveness of our people related policies, procedures, and practices, we collect and analyse anonymous employee diversity data and report on this annually to review the make-up of our workforce and address any changes that need to be made. We also collect and analyse anonymous recruitment candidate data to ensure our YMCA is attracting and recruiting a diverse pool of candidates for employment, governance, and volunteering opportunities.
- 7.4 To monitor the effectiveness of our service user related policies, procedures, and practices, we periodically collect anonymised diversity data for our service users. This information is used to proactively target residents or clients from these backgrounds to ensure they can access YMCA DLG services where appropriate and needed.
- 7.5 All monitoring is carried out in accordance with Data Protection Legislation including special considerations for the collection and storage of 'special category data', some of which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

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7.6 The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum is responsible for reviewing this policy every two years, or otherwise as required to reflect developments in equality legislation, data, and best practice. This policy is shared on our intranet MACY and on our website. Requests for this policy in alternative formats are welcomed and every effort will be made to meet them.

7.7 The Head of People, the designated Equal Opportunities Officer, has oversight of this policy.

8.0 Speaking up

If you experience or witness discrimination whilst working with us, using our services, or working in our communities, we want to know. YMCA DLG want to ensure your experience is recorded and the appropriate resolution sought.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination and harassment and aim to create an environment where individuals can:

- make a complaint or raise a grievance relating to discrimination and harassment without victimisation.
- feel confident and able to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

All complaints or grievances will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly and investigated as appropriate.

High-level data on complaints or grievances will be monitored by the Board and the overall effectiveness of the complaints and grievance processes will be periodically evaluated.

Employees wishing to raise a grievance regarding discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or bullying can refer to the Grievance Policy, or the Whistleblowing Policy.

Service users, volunteers, trustees, partners, or visitors who have witnessed or experienced unfair treatment or behaviour and wish to raise a complaint can do so by following the procedure in the Complaints Policy.

9.0 Non-compliance

Any breach of this policy by an employee will be investigated and dealt with via the Disciplinary Procedure. Where an employee is found to have unfairly discriminated, harassed, or victimised by another individual this could lead to dismissal.

Breaches by consultants or volunteers will be investigated and may result in the use of services being terminated.

Breaches by a partner organisation or supplier will result in the third party's employer being contacted and a formal complaint being made using that employer's procedures.

Breaches by a service user will be investigated and may result in participation in the service or programme being terminated.

10.0 Responsibilities

10.1 The **Board of Trustees** will:

- Uphold the principles of the Equality Act 2010, principle 1.3 of the National Housing Federation Code of Governance (the board demonstrates a clear and active commitment to achieve equality of opportunity, and diversity and inclusion in all the organisation's activities, as well as in its own composition), and the British Association of Counselling Professions Ethical Framework (specifically the Commonly Asked Questions in respect of equality, diversity, and inclusion).
- Work with the Leadership Teams to consider and define the culture and behaviours that best enable the organisation to deliver its mission and values, including our goal to be a more inclusive organisation.

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- Seek regular assurance about how the commitments in this policy are being delivered in practice and publish information annually about progress in delivering these commitments.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- Ensure marketing and internal and external communications reflect the spirit of this policy.
- Regularly review this policy within the People and Participation Committee (minimum every two years) and designate a trustee as Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion champion.

10.2 Chief Executive and Leadership Team

- Uphold the principles of the Equality Act 2010, the National Housing Federation Code of Governance, and the British Association of Counselling Professions Ethical Framework.
- Work with the Board of Trustees and employees to consider and define the culture and behaviours that best enable the organisation to deliver its mission and values.
- Provide regular assurance about how the commitments in this policy are being delivered.
- Ensure that the commitments in this policy are meaningfully demonstrated in other policies, processes and statements and that priorities and objectives are set for the organisation to achieve.
- Designate an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Champion on the Leadership Team.

10.3 People Managers

- Support day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Encourage, nurture, and promote a culture that supports equality, diversity, and inclusion and proactively challenge discriminatory practices and behaviours.
- Manage any instances of non-compliance with the act amongst employees and volunteers
- Ensure procedures are followed for all data processing, including archiving, data disposal, and managing subject access requests.
- Ensure all employment decisions are implemented on a fair and equitable basis, including diversity in recruitment to attract a diverse candidate base.
- Ensure, so far as reasonably possible, services are accessible and meet the needs of diverse groups and provide reasonable adjustments for service users.
- Create opportunities to discuss any practice-related difficulties in a safe and supportive environment to resolve difficulties that may emerge.

10.4 The People Team, including Learning and Development

- Ensure YMCA DLG has an overall People Strategy, and associated employment policies and practices throughout the employee lifecycle, which are inclusive (and these are continuously refreshed).
- Work with the Board of Trustees and Leadership Team to design and implement a behaviour framework that describes the desirable behaviours that will drive the commitments in this policy.
- Apply the principles of fairness, inclusion, and transparency in all decisions about recruitment and development, and be alert to the influence of unconscious biases.
- Deal with all forms of harassment and bullying that violate the YMCA DLG Code of Conduct.
- Build inclusion and diversity concepts and practices into employee and volunteer training and other development programmes to increase awareness of the need to handle different views, perceptions, and ideas in positive ways.
- Regularly audit and evaluate progress, using quantitative and qualitative data on inclusion and diversity to highlight where barriers exist.

10.5 All employees and volunteers

- Ensure the principles of EDI are upheld through their actions, and in any decisions taken as part of each their role.

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- During induction, read and understand this policy and complete the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion mandatory training.
- Champion the EDI principles and provide constructive challenge when behaviours do not promote or demonstrate them.

10.6 All service users

- Ensure the principles of EDI contained within this Policy are upheld.
- Champion the EDI principles and provide constructive challenge when behaviours do not promote or demonstrate them.

11.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Guidance

- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection and Information Handling
- Capability
- Management of Sickness Absence
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment
- Learning and Development
- Whistleblowing
- Flexible Working
- Managing Poor Performance
- Internal Communications and Knowledge Sharing
- Complaints
- Restructure and Redundancy
- Recruitment Guidance
- Grievance and disciplinary
- Resident's Handbook Agreement
- Social Media
- Our strategy, and our values

Relevant Legislation and Regulations

- Equality Act 2010
- Work and Families Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2019
- National Housing Federation Code of Governance (principle 1.3)
- British Association of Counselling Professions (BACP) Ethical Framework (specifically, the Commonly Asked Questions in respect of equality, diversity, and inclusion).

Further guidance and advice

ACAS <http://www.acas.org.uk/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

EASS <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/help>

Version control

Version #	Date of review	Reviewer	Summary of changes
07	25/09/22	JG/MM (with members of the EDI Forum)	Significant refresh of policy following feedback from members of the EDI Forum on 5/9/22, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extension of the grounds we believe impact on access (beyond the legally protected characteristics) - Widen the scope to include service users, and our commitment to providing equitable, diverse, and inclusive programmes and services - Insertion of section on allyship - Widening of legal and regulatory guidance - Insertion of section on consequences of non-compliance - Insertion of glossary of terms.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms (* indicates definition is from IOS 30415 standard)

Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to work.

Bias* refers to the tendency, inclination, or opinion that is preconceived or unreasoned that hinders impartial judgement. Bias can be unconscious, conscious, or systematic.

Detriment arising from disability is when an employer treats an employee unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of the employee's disability, and it cannot be justified in relation to the job.

Direct discrimination is when you treat someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic, whether the person possesses that protected characteristic or not. For example, not employing someone because they are a woman, or a particular race.

Diversity* refers to characteristics of differences and similarities between people. Diversity includes factors that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring when interacting at work. Diversity can support the development of workplace environments and practices that foster learning from others to gain diverse perspectives on inclusiveness.

Duty to make reasonable adjustments is where a provision, criterion, or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to others who are not disabled. The employer / service provider has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage, including changes to physical features, providing auxiliary aids, and providing information.

Equality* refers to a state of being equal, especially in status, rights, opportunities, or outcomes.

Equity* refers to the principle that policies, processes, and practices should be fairly applied, and individual needs recognised.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive working environment.

Indirect discrimination is when a policy, practice, or procedure that applies to everyone has an effect which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Intersectionality is a term which refers to the interconnected nature of different aspects of a person's identity and how together they can affect, determine, and compound a person's experience of discrimination.

Micro-aggressions, micro-behaviours, and micro-inequities are small, subtle differences in treatment that communicate over time that someone has less value.

Positive action is proportionate steps taken to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise a disadvantage, to meet their needs, or to participate. For example, using the pronoun that someone has asked you to use.

Positive discrimination refers to making a decision in someone's favour because of their particular characteristic. Positive discrimination is usually unlawful, unless it falls within one of the very limited exceptions contained in the anti-discrimination legislation in relation to disability or as a genuine occupational requirement.

Protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability, and pregnancy and maternity.

Victimisation is the act of singling someone out for cruel or unjust treatment. We ALL should be able to speak up without victimisation.