

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

How are our values demonstrated/supported through this policy?	<i>We do what's right</i> - this policy aims to ensure YMCA Downslink Group is a safe space where people feel secure, respected, heard and valued and can speak up and call out when this is not the case.
	<i>We work with heart</i> - this policy aims to ensure that we enable everyone who is part our workforce or the communities we serve, to feel supported and encouraged to grow.
	<i>We build real connection</i> - this policy ensures that we create spaces where we really listen and understand each other, and celebrate what makes us unique, because it makes us stronger.
Policy holder	Director of People and Programmes
Equity, Diversity & 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. Requests for copies of this policy in alternative formats are welcomed, and every effort will be made to meet them.
Version Control	Version number: 9
Review Information	First published: August 2011 Reviewed: June 2014, December 2016, June 2018, November 2019, June 2020, February 2023, June 2023, June 2025 Next Review Date: June 2028

Version control

Version #	Date of review	Reviewer	Summary of changes
			Change made
8	June 2023	JG/EDI Forum	Policy rewritten in consultation with EDI Staff Forum.
9	May 2025	JG/EDI Forum	Aligned to new policy template and edited to make it shorter and more accessible.

Explaining some of the words we use in this document

Diversity	refers to characteristics of differences and similarities between people, including factors that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring when interacting at work.
Reasonable adjustments	where a provision, criterion, or practice puts a person with a disability 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.
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	unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
Micro-aggressions	small, subtle differences in treatment that communicate over time that someone has less value.
Allyship	an active and consistent effort to use your privilege and power to support and advocate for people with less privilege
Positive action	proportionate steps taken to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome a disadvantage, to meet their needs or to participate.
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 should ALL be able to speak up without victimisation.

1 What is this policy about?

This policy explains how YMCA DownsLink Group (YMCA DLG) is committed to creating a positive culture throughout the organisation, where equity, diversity, inclusion and respect are at the centre of all our activities. The policy aims to support and promote equity, diversity and inclusion so that our workplace and our services are free from prejudice, discriminatory behaviour, and fear of harassment.

The policy is for everyone – staff and volunteers, our Board of Trustees, our partners and visitors as well as the residents and clients who use our services [referred to in this policy as ‘children and young adults’].

This policy recognises people are more likely to experience harassment and discrimination due to a whole range of individual characteristics, whether protected by law or not. See box below.

Protected characteristics (by law)	Characteristics (not protected by law)
• age • disability and neurodiversity • religion and belief • gender reassignment • marriage and civil partnership • sex	• appearance • mental or physical health issues not covered by law • ethnicity • geographical location • care leavers or those with care experience • housing

• pregnancy and maternity • race • sexual orientation	• language and communication barriers • caring/dependents status • socio-economic status • immigration status • offending background • spirituality • gender identity (as defined by the individual, not law) • any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice
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We are committed to going beyond the legal minimum regarding equality and to working towards best and exemplary practice. As a minimum, we consider the following equality legislation and associated codes of practice:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Part time working regulations 2000
- Work and Families Act 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended)
- National Housing Federation Code of Governance (principle 1.3)
- British Association of Counselling Professions (BACP) Ethical Framework
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2019

2 Who needs to read this policy?

Everyone needs to read the policy principles. If you are personally impacted by harassment and discrimination, or you witness such behaviour, you should read section 5 about how we apply the policy.

Trustees, directors and managers who are responsible for promoting a culture that supports equity, diversity, and inclusion must read the whole document and ensure they apply the policy.

3 Policy principles

We are committed to:

- ▶ All individuals being of equal value, irrespective of their background. Diversity is a strength which should be recognised, respected, and celebrated by all.
- ▶ No individual receiving 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.
- ▶ Value and dignity for an individual not meaning that everyone is treated in the same way. 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.

Our commitments to an inclusive workforce:

- ▶ We are committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, career development, and work conditions.
- ▶ We value diversity and aim to attract, develop, and retain talented individuals from all backgrounds, especially those with lived experiences of social exclusion.
- ▶ We strive to create a safe environment for staff to disclose disabilities and implement appropriate workplace adjustments. See our [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#).
- ▶ We support employees in balancing work and personal commitments.
- ▶ Our induction program ensures awareness of our values and EDI principles. We provide training on discrimination and harassment prevention, and access to development resources.
- ▶ We foster a culture where individuals can speak up against discrimination and harassment. We welcome constructive challenges and monitor workforce composition to prioritise positive action. Our policies and practices are regularly reviewed to uphold EDI principles.

Our commitments to inclusive services:

- ▶ We work hard to make our services are relevant and accessible to the communities we serve. We create psychologically informed environments based on safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment.
- ▶ We aim to ensure children and young people have clear and effective ways they can tell us about what they want from our services. They are the best judges of their needs. This may include a 'you said, we did' approach, community consultations, or surveys, as examples.
- ▶ We aim to work in partnership with other providers to support under-served groups.
- ▶ We aim to continuously assess and improve our programmes to ensure inclusivity.

Our commitment to allyship in the workplace

- ▶ We promote inclusion through training on allyship; an active and consistent effort to use your privilege and power to support and advocate for people with less privilege.
- ▶ We encourage staff and volunteers to recognise their privilege, be vulnerable, stay curious, and take action to improve policies and processes.
- ▶ We are active bystanders, calling out microaggressions and engaging diverse perspectives in decision-making.

4 Responsibilities

Staff and volunteers will ensure the principles in this policy are upheld through their actions, and in any decisions taken as part of each their role. During induction you should read and understand this policy and complete the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion mandatory training.

Children and young adults will ensure the principles in this policy are upheld and should feel able to provide constructive challenge when behaviours of staff, volunteers or partners do not align with them.

Line managers will support the day-to-day implementation of this policy by nurturing and promoting an organisational culture that supports equity, diversity, and inclusion and proactively challenges discriminatory practices and behaviours. This includes encouraging team members to participate in the EDI Forum and/or any working groups.

The People Team will ensure our People Strategy, and associated employment policies and practices, are inclusive. They will apply the principles of fairness, inclusion, and transparency in decisions about recruitment and development, deal with all forms of harassment and bullying that violate our Code of Conduct, deliver learning and development programmes for staff and trustees that increase awareness of the need to handle different views, perceptions, and ideas in positive ways and regularly audit and evaluate progress, highlighting where barriers exist.

The Executive Team will uphold the principles in this Policy and give assurance on how they are being delivered. They will work with the Board of Trustees to uphold the culture and behaviours that best enable the organisation to deliver its mission and values. The Director of People and

Programmes is the designated equity, diversity, and inclusion champion on the Executive Team, chairs the EDI Forum and is accountable for delivery of the EDI Action Plan.

The Board of Trustees will uphold the principles in this Policy, and specifically principle 1.3 of the National Housing Federation Code of Governance. They will work with the Executive Team to consider and define the culture and behaviours that best enable the organisation to deliver its mission and values and seek regular assurance about how the commitments in this policy are being delivered in practice. They will publish information annually about progress in delivering these commitments as part of their annual trustees' report and attend regular training.

5 How we apply this policy

Our organisational **values**, alongside our **Code of Conduct** reinforce the commitments and principles in this policy.

Our annual **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan** specifies objectives and actions that give meaning to the commitments and principles in this policy.

Responsibility for implementing the EDI Action Plan rests with the staff-led **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Forum**, which is open to all staff and volunteers. Details of how to join the Forum can be found on MacyHub, the staff intranet.

5.1 Speaking up

We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination and harassment. If you experience or witness discrimination whilst working with us, using our services, or working in our communities, we want to know. We want to ensure your experience is recorded and the appropriate resolution sought.

Staff wishing to raise a grievance regarding discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or bullying can refer to our [Grievance Policy](#), or our [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Children and young adults using our services, 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](#).

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 of Trustees and the overall effectiveness of the complaints and grievance processes will be periodically evaluated.

5.2 Non-compliance

Any breach of this policy by a member of staff will be investigated and dealt with via the [Disciplinary Policy](#). Where a staff member 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 child or young person will be investigated and may result in participation in the service or programme being terminated.

5.3 Monitoring effectiveness

We monitor the effectiveness of our people related policies, procedures, and practices, by collecting and analysing anonymous staff diversity data and we 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 we are attracting and recruiting a diverse pool of candidates.

To monitor the effectiveness of our services related policies, procedures, and practices, we periodically collect anonymised diversity data for the children and young adults that use our services. We also periodically conduct Equality Impact Assessments of our services. This information is used to proactively target residents or clients from marginalised backgrounds to ensure they can access our services where appropriate and needed.

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.

6 Further information

Related Policies, Procedures and Guidance

- Accessible Communications Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints policy
- Data Protection and Information Handling policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Flexible Working policy
- Grievance policy
- Internal Communications policy
- Learning and Development policy
- Managing Poor Performance policy
- Management of Sickness Absence policy
- Our strategy, and our values
- Reasonable Adjustments policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Resident's Handbook Agreement
- Tone of Voice and Communicating Without Prejudice Guidance
- Managing Change and Redundancy policy
- Social Media policy
- Whistleblowing policy

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>