

BLEND YOUTH PROJECT

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

OCTOBER 2024

Equality & Diversity Policy

Statement of Intent

- Blend Youth Project is committed to providing an environment of service delivery and employment that promotes equality, inclusion and diversity and that combats discrimination in all its forms.
- Blend Youth Project values diversity, welcomes interest from all sections of the community and is committed to building and reinforcing a culture where people treat each other with kindness and respect.
- Blend Youth Project serves and employs people of many different backgrounds and works with many different communities. Our approach to equality and diversity forms part of the framework within which other policies, procedures and practices are developed and implemented.
- Blend Youth Project aims not to discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, or any other reason, and aims to promote equal opportunity, community cohesion and good relations between people and groups of all backgrounds, lifestyles and beliefs.
- All allegations of unlawful discrimination and harassment will be treated seriously. Any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment is totally unacceptable and such behaviour by staff is considered a disciplinary offence.
- Blend Youth Project will actively encourage accessibility and inclusive practice, not just in the physical layout of venues, buildings and facilities but in the planning, development and delivery of services.
- Blend Youth Project aspires to be a safe place of belonging for all and we commit to fostering an organisational culture where diversity is celebrated and in which our commitment to inclusivity is both intentional and visible.
- All staff will receive training on Equality and Diversity.

Scope

This Policy applies to the BYP employment and volunteering practices, governance, service planning, access and service delivery. Contractors and organisations that we work in partnership with are also expected to support the principles of this policy.

Roles & Responsibilities

All employees, managers, board members and volunteers are responsible for:

- Complying fully with the policy, and working with colleagues to deliver services in line with the policy.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour to staff, service users, parents, partners & members of the community.

- Ensuring that they are not involved in or collude with unlawful discrimination or harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- Challenging inappropriate / oppressive behaviour or language as necessary.
- Actively participating in equality and diversity training, service reviews, equality impact assessments and equality action plans as required.

Managers are also responsible for: -

- Ensuring that equality considerations are integral to all policy decisions and objectives with regards to service delivery, purchasing, procurement, pay, employment practices, and volunteering.
- Evaluating services, taking account of equality issues and monitoring information and taking appropriate action to ensure diverse needs of service users and customers are met.
- Dealing effectively with alleged breaches of this policy, by staff, volunteers, service users, parents or partners.
- Implementing all BYP policies in accordance with the principles of this policy.
- Positively promoting this policy and ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour, setting standards for staff and volunteers.
- Supporting people who are facing unlawful discriminatory behaviour from service users, volunteers or staff.

Board Members are also responsible for: -

- Ensuring that equality issues are considered in relation to all issues of governance, policy development, service development, remuneration and employment.
- Reviewing monitoring information.
- Working towards a diverse membership base for the Board of Directors and members.

Recruitment & Employment

Blend Youth Project is committed to ensuring that we provide equality of opportunity to all employees and volunteers. We will work to ensure that we promote equality of opportunity and good working relationships and do not unlawfully discriminate against any job applicant, volunteer or employee for any reason.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our recruitment and selection procedures are fair so that the best people are appointed to deliver our services;
- Considering applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, appropriate qualifications, skills and abilities;
- Reviewing posts with Genuine Occupational Requirements (GOR's) each time the post becomes vacant to ensure the GOR is still relevant;
- Ensuring that all employees receive fair treatment and pay in relation to their employment;
- Monitoring our workforce composition, recruitment activity, pay levels and other employment practices to assess the impact on different groups and individuals;

- Considering making reasonable adjustments to practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled employee, volunteer or applicant is not put at a disadvantage due to being disabled;
- Where someone becomes disabled, making every effort through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment as appropriate to enable them to remain employed by BYP;
- Not discriminating against anyone on the basis that they look after or care for someone who is disabled;
- Taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination;
- Being committed to non-discriminatory employment practices in all areas.

Working Environment & Culture

- It is the intention of Blend Youth Project that no individual or organisation connected with its activities shall hinder the positive implementation of this policy.
- Any employee may use the grievance procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct.
- No individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance unless it is proved to be untrue and made in bad faith.
- Any complaints will be fully investigated in accordance with the procedures as laid out in the grievance procedure.
- Any discrimination or harassment proven to have taken place will be regarded as gross misconduct for the purposes of disciplinary procedures.
- Wherever reasonably practicable, the organisation will make reasonable adjustments to working conditions and practices appropriate to the needs of all staff and volunteers.
- Blend Youth Project will seek a commitment to equal opportunities on the part of any other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, with which it works in partnership.

Service Delivery

Blend Youth Project is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the delivery of its services.

- We will take positive action to challenge and counteract the effects of discriminatory behaviour from people or organisations who access our premises or come into contact with our workforce.
- Training and guidance will be provided for employees so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to promoting equality in service provision.
- A young person's age, gender, health, personality, sexual orientation, race, culture and life experience are all relevant to any consideration of needs and vulnerability and will be taken into account when planning and providing activities & services.

- We will ensure that service users are encouraged to engage with and participate in the planning and delivery of services where appropriate.
- All young people engaging in our service will be accorded equal rights and opportunities to ensure they maximize their benefit from participation.
- Young people accessing our service will have equal opportunities to reach their full potential and to participate in activities. We will respect different religions and cultural beliefs and will promote an understanding of different cultures.
- Activities and resources will be used which are anti-discriminatory, contain images of all groups and avoid stereotyping. Resources will be chosen to give young people a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of the rich diversity of our multi-cultural society.
- Materials will be selected to help young people to develop their self-respect and to respect other people by avoiding stereotypes and derogatory pictures or messages about any group of people.
- Clear information will be provided about our services and, where necessary, in a variety of formats.
- We will consider making reasonable adjustments to practices, equipment and premises to ensure that disabled people are not put at a disadvantage due to their disability.

Promoting British Values

Staff have an obligation, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of young people/students. Within this remit, staff should also promote the fundamental British values of:

1. Democracy,
2. The rule of law,
3. Individual liberty, and
4. Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Actively promoting the values means constructively challenging opinions or behaviours that are contrary to British values.

The list below describes the understanding and knowledge expected of young people/students as a result of promoting fundamental British values:

- Enable young people/students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Enable young people/students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Encourage young people/students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in their locality and to society more widely.
- Enable young people/students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England.

- Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling young people/students to acquire an appreciation for and respect for their own and other cultures
- Encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

Implementation

- Implementation of this policy is the duty and responsibility of all employees and volunteers and a copy of the policy will be made available to each employee.
- All applicants for paid or voluntary work will receive a copy of the Valley CIDS Equality & Diversity Policy and will be expected to demonstrate their understanding in an interview situation.

Review

- Blend Youth Project's commitment to equality and diversity is an active one. This document will be reviewed and amendments made as required on a regular basis as part of this active commitment.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Blend Youth Project will also seek to keep abreast of new developments in equality and diversity practice and actively seek information on this issue.

Appendix 1: - Legislation and Good Practice

This policy is intended to comply with all relevant legislation and good practice. Relevant legislation includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986 (amended 1999)
- Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (taking account of relevant exclusion clauses as laid out in The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2010 (encompasses and replaces all of the above and other associated equalities legislation)

Appendix 2: - GLOSSARY OF USEFUL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TERMS

Age covers everyone. In certain cases, e.g. licensing laws, health and safety laws, other legislation will override equalities legislation e.g. it is lawful to refuse someone a job serving alcohol if they are under 18.

Bullying is defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, an abuse of power or unfair sanctions that make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable

Direct Discrimination is when someone is unlawfully treated less favourably than someone else due to a legally protected characteristic and there is no objective justification for this e.g. refusing to employ someone as a receptionist because they are too old.

Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some long-term illnesses are also covered. Learning disabilities and people with facial disfigurements may also be included.

Discrimination by Association is where someone is discriminated against on the basis that they are “associated with” someone in a protected group e.g. being discriminated against because your child is disabled.

Diversity means understanding and respecting the differences that exist amongst people both within and beyond legal requirements. It is about treating people as individuals and making them feel valued and respected.

Dual Discrimination – Direct discrimination due to a combination of two protected characteristics e.g. age and gender.

Equality is providing and promoting equality of opportunity. It is not treating everyone in the same way. Equality is about giving people fair access and opportunity whilst recognising that everyone is different with different needs and requirements.

Equality Impact Assessments – are assessments, based on evidence, that systematically assess and record the actual, potential or likely impact of a service, policy, project or plan on different groups of people. The findings are then used to make any required improvements or changes.

Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) / Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) A GOQ / GOR applies where there is an exception under the relevant legislation, to allow for the recruitment, training, promotion or transfer of a person of a specific group due to the demands of the particular post e.g. a woman to work in a women-only refuge.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. This may include non-verbal behaviour, inappropriate action, comments, physical contact or banter against people.

Indirect Discrimination is when there is a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone but might disadvantage a particular group, and which cannot be justified in relation to the job e.g. an unjustified height requirement could adversely impact on females.

Race covers ethnic or national origins, nationality, race and colour.

Religion & Belief is defined as any religion or religious belief or non-belief. Certain philosophical beliefs are also covered.

Sex covers men, women and transgender men and women (planning, undergoing or having completed gender reassignment or living as a gender different to that at birth). Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding also have specific legislative protection against discrimination.

Sexual Orientation This includes lesbians, gay people, heterosexuals and bi-sexual people.

Victimisation is when someone is treated less favourably or discriminated against because they have pursued or intended to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination

Appendix 3: - Understanding & Compliance

Confirmation of understanding & compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Blend Youth Project's 'Equality & Diversity Policy'

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Director of Young People's Services.