

Policy: Equality, diversity and inclusion

This policy sets out what you can expect from the charity and the actions you need to take if you think that we're not following the law or meeting our promises.

This policy applies to anyone interacting with our charity, including our beneficiaries, supporters and our people – our staff and volunteers.

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1. Introduction

Diversity and inclusion matters to us. It's written into the values that guide our behaviour and the principles that guide our decisions.

We want to harness the value and diversity that everyone brings to help deliver our goals, recognising and promoting everyone's individuality with kindness. We want to make sure that we all understand the strength that diversity brings to all areas of our work – including both people who work for us and with us.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination at work and in wider society. Specifically, it exists to protect us from discrimination based on these characteristics:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are described as 'protected characteristics'.

We do not tolerate discrimination in any form.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out seven different types of discrimination:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

Associative discrimination

This occurs when someone is directly discriminated against because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception

This discrimination occurs when someone is directly discriminated against because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess the characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

This occurs when there is a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Our people are able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. They are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

For behaviour to count as harassment in equality law, it has to be one of three types:

- Unwanted behaviour related to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.
- Sexual harassment.
- Less favourable treatment because of submission to or rejection of previous sex or gender reassignment harassment.

Harassment by a third party

The Equality Act makes us potentially liable for harassment of your people by people (third parties) who are not employees of your company, such as customers or clients.

Harassment by a third party occurs when an employer subjects their employee to harassment where:

- a third party subjects the employee to harassment in the course of the employee's employment
- the employer fails to take reasonably practicable steps to protect their employee from that third-party harassment
- the harassment is known to have occurred on at least two previous occasions
- the third-party harasser does not have to be the same individual on each occasion or employed by the same organisation

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010; or because they are suspected of doing so.

Our values and guiding principles

The Equality Act 2010 sets out our legal obligations. Our values and strategic principles set out how diversity and inclusion matters to us at our charity. Our four values and five principles should be used together – our four values to guide our behaviour, and our five principles to inform decisions we make.

Two of our five strategic principles speak to this:

- **We unleash potential:** In people affected by stroke, ourselves and others, harnessing the value and diversity that everyone brings to help deliver our goals.
- **We care for ourselves as for others:** Together we foster a culture of mutual respect and empowerment. We want to do more than practice kindness – we want to be an organisation that excels in it.

And our value of being **human**: Recognising and promoting everyone's individuality with kindness. Their unique needs, experiences, strengths and weaknesses. And we embrace this to achieve the best possible outcomes for stroke survivors, our charity and our partners.



2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to:

- **All of our people.** This includes full-time, part-time and contracted employees. And although the Equality Act doesn't apply to volunteers, we apply the same principles to recruiting and supporting our volunteers.
- **All of our customers.** This includes people accessing support from us and our supporters.
- **All of our partners.** Including our partners in research, in influencing and in service delivery.

3. Our commitments

To our people – our staff and volunteers

We will:

- Take discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace incredibly seriously. And will deal swiftly and appropriately with any reports of behaviours or actions that violate or breach our dignity at work.
- Never discriminate when recruiting to both paid and unpaid roles, focused on finding the best person to deliver the role on the basis of relevant demonstrable experience, qualifications, skills, competencies and abilities.
- Focus on building a diverse organisation that tackles barriers to inclusion, recognising the strength that a diverse workforce and inclusive experience brings to our work.
- Make sure that there's equal access to training, development, pay and promotion for all our staff.
- Make sure that our people – our staff and volunteers – are equipped to deliver against our commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion.
- Encourage and listen to ideas and suggestions from our people for improving services and ways of working to make sure that we're accessible and inclusive as we grow.
- Treat each other equally and with respect. We promote and value equality of opportunity and will not accept any form of bullying, harassment or unfair opportunity, which violates or breaches our dignity at work.

To our customers

To people who use our services

On top of our service standards, we will:

- Work to understand the needs of communities and individuals to make sure our services are accessible and inclusive.
- Work to meet the diverse needs of the communities we work with, including making information available in community languages and using interpreting services.
- Develop access and referral arrangements which reflect local community need and monitor take-up.
- Monitor who is accessing our services and service satisfaction to identify and address any barriers to inclusion.

- Work with other voluntary and statutory agencies to understand future need and develop services to meet those needs.
- Work with other voluntary and statutory agencies to promote equality and diversity and to tackle disadvantage and discrimination.
- Make sure that our materials and communications are inclusive, taking into account the communities we work with.
- Provide opportunities for the voices of people affected by stroke to shape our services and decisions.
- Take action to address inappropriate behaviour towards our people – our staff or volunteers - including discrimination and harassment.
- Make sure that our people – our staff and volunteers - understand and uphold our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

To people who support us

We couldn't do our vital work without the support of people who donate their money or lend their voice to rebuilding lives after stroke.

We make sure that our supporter events, activities and communications are easily accessed by anyone in the communities we work in.

We seek to develop, where possible, mutual relationships within diverse communities right across the UK.

We also work to reduce any barriers to inclusion for people who want to take part in fundraising and campaigning activities. This includes providing a range of ways to get involved, as well as providing adjustments where possible.

To our partners – in research, influencing and service delivery

We work with a variety of partners to make progress against our three strategic goals. To make stroke a priority. To make sure that everyone affected by stroke has access to the rehabilitation and lifelong support they need. And to partner with people and communities to take action on stroke.

We're working to see increased investment and capacity in stroke research. We want to see stroke research that achieves the greatest impact for people rebuilding their lives after stroke. We make sure that research environments have robust equality, diversity and inclusion policies in place too – protecting their staff and their research subjects from discrimination.

We want to close inequality gaps in stroke treatment and outcomes. And influencing is one of the ways we do this. Our influencing work is guided by evidence and insight that we collect from our work right across the UK. From health outcomes to conversation with stroke survivors and their families. This evidence informs our influencing approach and the places – people, organisations and communities – that we target.

We provide services to commissioners that meet the needs of people affected by stroke in communities across the UK. We work with organisations, community groups and individuals in those communities to make sure that we meet the diverse needs of different communities.

We communicate with millions of people each year through our information, services, research and fundraising activity. We want our communications to be as accessible as possible. So we make sure that the information we produce is:

- **Short and simple.** Making even complex information easy to understand.
- **Supported with images.** To support people to understand what's written.
- **Available in accessible formats.** Including aphasia friendly formats
- **Produced in line with relevant legislation.**
- **Targeted to meet the needs of our customers.**
- **Available in other languages as appropriate.**

3. Making this Happen

Delivering against this policy is a team effort. We all have a part to play.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality, promote inclusion and celebrate diversity. And to challenge people's prejudices as well as any behaviour that amounts to discrimination or harassment.