

Introduction

This policy is for the people we support, our staff and other people who have contact with Hand in Hands.

We expect everyone to follow this policy.

This policy explains:

- What Diversity and Equality means at Hand in Hands.
- How we can expect to be treated.
- How we should treat other people.
- How Hand in Hands will work towards removing prejudiced or unlawful discrimination. and
- How Hand in Hands will promote diversity and equality.

Hand in Hands policy statement

We value the rich mix of cultures, skills, knowledge and experience that people with different backgrounds bring to Hand in Hands.

We welcome both the differences in people and the many sides of every person. This is an important part of our person-centred approach to delivering support.

We want to be an inclusive organisation for:

- The people we support, their families, close friends and advocates
- All staff
- All volunteers
- Other people we come into contact with

We will promote equality and we will not discriminate unlawfully in respect of the following areas which are covered by law.

AREA OF EQUALITY	RELEVANT LEGISLATION
Race, colour, national or ethnic origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Race Relations Act 1976 ➤ Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Gender, transgender and marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equal Pay Act 1970 ➤ Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (updated 1986) ➤ Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 ➤ Equality Act 2010
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ➤ Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Part-time status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 (amended in 2002)
Age and apparent age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 ➤ Equality Act 2010

Religion/belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 ➤ Equality Act 2010
Caring responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employment Act 2002 ➤ Work and Families Act 2006
Trade union membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ➤ Employment Relations Act 2004

We will comply with all of the above laws. We will also comply with relevant Codes of Practice and any new equality laws that may take effect after this policy is issued.

What we mean by equality

In Hand in Hands, we believe in promoting and achieving equality between people.

This does not mean that everything should be the same for everyone. It does mean:

- Giving everyone equal respect as a person.
- Dealing with people fairly.
- Recognising, respecting and responding to the individual needs of each of the people we support.
- Taking steps to make sure that particular groups of people (e.g. people with disabilities, people from minority ethnic groups, and many others who experience unfair disadvantage in their lives) are not unlawfully or unfairly discriminated against, either in the way we employ our staff or in the way we provide our support.
- Working to make a positive difference to the lives of the people we support who have often experienced disadvantage.

What we mean by diversity

Diversity recognises that each person is different in lots of different ways. This is our individual diversity - our likes, dislikes, interests, experiences, skills and beliefs. It is therefore unacceptable to treat a person as if he/she could be summed up in one word.

It is a major part of Hand in Hands' commitment to person-centred support that this *personal* diversity is recognised and respected.

There is diversity too *between* people. We believe that the diversity between people:

- Broadens our view on every aspect of the support we provide.
- Enables better solutions to problems and challenges.
- Brings fresh creativity to communities and organisations.

Hand in Hands are committed to promoting diversity and using it constructively, because then it can help us to achieve equality, fairness and social justice.

Hand in Hands values

Diversity will help us to achieve Hand in Hands' values, which are to enable people to:

- Everyone has the ability to develop.
- Everyone has the right to have control over how they lead their life.
- Everyone's relationships are valuable.
- Everyone has the right to support in keeping with their basic human rights.

Hand in Hands equality and diversity objectives

We want to:

- Be an organisation that is fair and free from prejudiced and unlawful discrimination.
- Provide support that is accessible and appropriate for everyone we support.
- Employ people for what they can do, not for who they are.
- Value the differences in people and between people.
- Build a culture of respect, which is free from bullying and harassment, and where people's dignity at work is valued.
- Positively promote equality through what we do and how we communicate.
- Take complaints about inequality and unfair treatment seriously.
- Be an organisation that listens and responds to feedback and complaints.

How we achieve our equality and diversity objectives

- Below are some of the ways we will try and achieve our equality and diversity objectives. We will:
 - Monitor the use of our support to identify groups whose needs we are meeting less well.
 - Monitor our recruitment and employment practices to ensure we are providing a fair process for all.
 - Provide specific guidance for all staff on equality and diversity.
 - We will act on feedback received and review/amend procedures.

Responsibility for equality and diversity

At Hand in Hands, we are all responsible. Equality and diversity are not additional extras, but part of everything we do and a key element of our vision.

- **As an organisation**, we are responsible for providing people with fair access to support, employment and promotional opportunities.
- **The Care Manager** is responsible for leading the organisation to make sure that equality and diversity happens at all times.
- **All senior staff** are responsible for delivering fully accessible support and positive team working, promoting anti-discriminatory practice.
- **The people we support, their families, close friends and advocates** should act in accordance with this policy and be given assistance to understand the importance of equality and diversity at Hand in Hands.
- **All staff** have a duty to challenge (or report if that feels more appropriate) all forms of prejudiced or unlawful discrimination and harassment that they see or experience. We should work together to promote equality, fairness and respect.

We can all show our commitment to equality and diversity by:

- Trying to recognise and question our own prejudices and assumptions about others. Assumptions may not be correct and can be damaging to others.
- Thinking about what we do and how we behave. This is not about treating everyone the same, but about understanding that everyone is different. We need to treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- Being open and honest, making any criticism in a sensitive and constructive way.
- Taking a stand against prejudiced or unlawful discrimination. For example, speaking out against discriminatory jokes and remarks.
- Reporting cases of harassment and bullying.

If you experience unlawful discrimination or unfair practices

If you experience unlawful discrimination or unfair practices while working with us or receiving our support, we want to know.

We want to make sure that the matter is investigated and sorted out.

If you are a person we support then you should use the complaints procedure.

If you are an employee you can, in the first instance, speak to a senior staff member or the Care Manager to resolve the matter informally. Alternatively, you can use the grievance procedure.

Your complaint will be taken seriously and we will take action where Hand in Hands' policies have been breached.

Discriminatory behaviours by the people we support will be dealt with initially by advice and counselling. If the behaviour persists, we will see whether there are any other ways in which we can help the individual to change their behaviour.

Discriminatory behaviours by employees will be treated as a serious offence, and may lead to disciplinary action.

Discriminatory behaviour by family members, friends, advocates, visitors, supplier or anyone else who is in contact with Hand in Hands, will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the situation.