

EQUALITY POLICY

Section	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Roles & Responsibilities 2.1 Role of Chief Executive 2.2 Role of Senior Leadership Team 2.3 Role of Staff	2
3. Statutory Requirements 3.1 Useful Definitions 3.2 Recruitment 3.3 Positive Action	5
4. Monitoring	7
5. Harassment, Bullying and Grievance Procedures	7

Passed by the Board February 2022
To be updated February 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Unitas Youth Zone recognises its responsibilities to ensure the fair and equal treatment of everyone employed and those individuals who undertake work on Youth Zone premises.

This policy sets out the principles under which we will operate to meet these aims and includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of Unitas Youth Zone, workers (engaged through, or by, an employment agency) and all job applicants regarding recruitment. It also applies to sub-contractors; in that we will take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviours whilst on Youth Zone premises. However, if any issues become apparent with regards to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party's behaviour towards others involved at the Youth Zone, i.e. staff, young people, parents, other workers engaged, these will be taken very seriously and those individuals asked to leave the premises.

It is recognised that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups, Unitas intends to strive to ensure that differences do not become barriers to participation, access and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met.

All employment related policies are applied impartially and objectively and are designed to promote equal opportunity and protection against discrimination.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Role of Chief Executive:

- It is the Chief Executive's responsibility to implement the Equality Policy
- It is the Chief Executive's role to ensure that the appropriate members of staff are kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.
- The Chief Executive promotes the principle of equal opportunity in all aspects of Youth Zone life.
- The Chief Executive treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

2.2 Role of Senior Leadership Team:

- The Senior Leadership Team will have responsibility for supporting everyone in implementing this policy.
- The Team will provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- The Team, alongside the Chief Executive, will provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.

2.3 Role of Youth Zone employees and volunteers:

- All employees and volunteers will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, equally and with respect and will maintain awareness of the Equality Policy.
- All employees and volunteers will strive to promote positive images, based on race, gender and ability and will challenge stereotypical images throughout the Youth Zone.
- All employees and volunteers will challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination, drawing them to the attention of the Chief Executive or the HR and Systems Manager or the Chair of the board (in the case of incidents involving the Chief Executive)

3. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Youth Zone welcomes its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and it is recognised that that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the 'protected characteristics' that qualify for protection from discrimination. These are:

Age

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age. However, situations may arise which require special consideration and where a genuine occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment/volunteering of someone above a particular age. It is envisaged that these situations will be unusual and exceptional and will be discussed in advance.

Disability

We are opposed to any discrimination against any person with a disability, based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of the post to which they were appointed.

Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to an employee/volunteer's working conditions or environment for any person with a disability appointed to a post within the Youth Zone, where the adjustments are reasonably practicable.

Gender Re-assignment

We are opposed to any discrimination because of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing, or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of re-assigning a person's sex. We further are opposed to discrimination as a result a person being transsexual i.e., their gender identity being different to the gender assigned at birth, recognising that changing physiological or other gender attributes is a personal process rather than a medical one.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

We are opposed to any discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

Pregnancy and Maternity

We are opposed to discriminating against a woman on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and maternity leave to which she is entitled.

Race

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins). However, situations may arise which require special consideration and where a genuine occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment/volunteering of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. It is envisaged that these situations will be unusual and exceptional and will be discussed in advance.

Religion or Belief

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief. As stated in the Equality Act 2010, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, where employees or job seekers do not follow a certain religion or have a religion at all.

Sex

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on gender. However, situations may arise which require special consideration and where a genuine occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment/volunteering of someone of one particular sex. It is envisaged that these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed in advance.

Sexual Orientation

We are opposed to any discrimination against employees based on perceived or actual sexual orientation. The Equality Act protects bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender and heterosexual people. It is unlawful to discriminate against any individual on the grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, or the actual or perceived sexual orientation of those with whom they associate.

Bullying or Harassment

We are opposed to any unwanted conduct relating to any characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. We are further opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff or volunteer either by an employee or third party. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the Youth Zone's disciplinary procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.

3.1 Useful Definitions

Type of Discrimination	Description
Racism	When a person is treated worse, excluded, disadvantaged, harassed, bullied, humiliated, or degraded because of their race or ethnicity (race or ethnicity includes people's colour, and nationality including citizenship, ethnic or national origins). At an organisational level, it can also be the collective failure to provide an inclusive and professional working environment to people because of their race or ethnicity (this is sometimes described as 'institutional racism').
Bullying & Harassment	Is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unfair treatment • spreading malicious rumours • picking on or regularly undermining someone • denying someone's training or promotion opportunities.
Direct Discrimination	When someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.
Discrimination by association	This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Perception Discrimination	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 that characteristic.
Indirect Discrimination	Can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even practice (whether it's written down or not) that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress code • Terms and conditions • Selection criteria used in recruitment. • The way employees are selected for redundancy. • Policies on ways of working, for example flexible working or working from home.

The Youth Zone will not discriminate directly or indirectly when dealing with requests for time off for religious and belief observance. However, employees need to be aware that the law does not confer an automatic right for employees to have time off, or to be provided with facilities to undertake religious observance.

We will where reasonably practicable, in line with the Equality Act 2010, strive to accommodate reasonable adjustments to working conditions, the working environment, recruitment processes and terms and conditions of employment to help overcome practical difficulties created by a particular disability.

We will not treat any employee unfairly, based on their membership of a trade union.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

3.2 Recruitment

Where possible, vacancies will be advertised openly either internally or externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles,

- (i) A detailed role profile will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties or competencies of the post.
- (ii) An objective and sufficiently detailed person specification (where applicable) will be defined from the role profile.
- (iii) From these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up.
- (iv) Shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria
- (v) Selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria
- (vi) A written record of the selection decision relating to the agreed criteria will be retained.
- (vii) Reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the Youth Zone.

The Youth Zone will where possible ensure that recruiting managers attend unconscious bias training, in order to optimise our processes for diversity and inclusion.

3.3 Positive Action

We recognise that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the Youth Zone. We will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of disadvantaged groups. We will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action to ensure the workforce of the Youth Zone is reflective of the community and area it supports to enable those groups to compete on an equal basis. Positive action measures may include:

- (i) Encouraging applications from specific groups which are underrepresented in the Youth Zone
- (ii) Encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts.
- (iii) Flexible working – consideration of flexible working where operational factors makes this possible.
- (iv) Supporting training measures for under-represented groups.

4. MONITORING

Where monitoring of equality data takes place, the Youth Zone commits to adhering to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, and updated General Data Protection Regulations 2018, and all data will be managed accordingly.

5. HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Any employee of the Youth Zone who wishes to make a complaint or grievance under this policy, should do so using the Grievance Procedure. Complaints made under this procedure should be made within 30 working days of the last action complained of. Where the actions complained of are allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination on a continuing basis the 30-day limitation will not apply. Where there are medical reasons for a delay in making the complaint the 30-day period may be extended where it is reasonable to do so.