Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Revision history		Date
	Last review	May 2026
	Next Review	May 2028

Distribution

Distribution All Trustees, staff & volunteers

1. Policy statement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is integral to all the work of Rainbow Haven and the services we provide. We are committed to treating all individuals and groups in a fair and just manner. We actively ensure that our policies and working practices are non-discriminatory and promote equality of opportunity. We firmly oppose discrimination in all its forms and work actively to raise awareness and challenge practices which are prejudicial and biased, both within our organisation and among volunteers, service-users, partners and suppliers.

It is our policy that all decisions are made fairly, based on the legitimate needs of the organisation. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, disability, religion or belief, age or any other ground on which it is or becomes unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England and Wales (referred to as **Protected Characteristics**).

Additionally, we will not discriminate against people for reasons of immigration status, social class, trade union membership or responsibility for dependants. Our commitment to equal opportunities extends to all our activities, including:

- recruitment and selection procedures
- terms of employment, including pay, conditions and benefits;
- training, appraisals, career development and promotion;
- work practices, conduct issues, allocation of tasks, discipline and grievances;
- work-related social events; and
- termination of employment and matters after termination, including references.
- service offering and delivery that meets the diverse demands of everyone in the community of East Manchester and beyond

This is a statement of policy and does not form part of a contract of employment.

2. Definitions

Equality
Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. At Rainbow Haven we respect each person equally.

Diversity
Diversity describes how people differ and encompasses different characteristics – the full spectrum of human difference. Rainbow Haven recognises and celebrates difference as something that is positive and beneficial to us all. Rainbow Haven aims to create a community of diverse experiences, talents, skills, opinions and personalities.

Inclusion
Inclusion refers to a culture where all people feel seen, heard, known and safe. Inclusion is authentically bringing in excluded, under-represented and marginalised groups into processes and decision making in a way that shares power and creates a sense of belonging.

It is worth noting we can strive towards diversity and still exclude people from conversations implicitly and explicitly make people feel like they don't belong. Diversity without inclusion is tokenism, giving the appearance of equality but leaving people from marginalised or under-represented groups on the outside.

There is a strong link between social class and groups with other protected characteristics, as they are often denied access to power, wealth, status, resources and opportunities. Social class is not a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010. However because of its close links to other inequalities and the way socio-economic status is built into our social structures, it is included it in our policy and action plan.

3. Who is responsible for equality, diversity and inclusion?

You are.

Achieving an equal opportunities workplace is a collective task shared between Trustees, Rainbow Haven staff irrespective of seniority, tenure and working hours, consultants and contractors, casual or agency staff, trainees, students, homeworkers, fixed-term staff, volunteers or interns.

The TEMCA Board has overall responsibility for this policy and for equal opportunities and discrimination law compliance in the workplace. The Operations Manager has day-to-day operational responsibility for these matters.

Everyone has personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy; to treat colleagues and service users with dignity at all times; and to not discriminate against or harass other members of staff, visitors, service users, suppliers or other partners. In addition, staff who take part in management, recruitment, selection, promotion, training and other aspects of career development have special responsibility for leading by example and ensuring compliance.

Managers must take all necessary steps to:

- promote the objective of equal opportunities and the values set out in this policy;
- ensure that their own behaviour and those of the staff they manage complies in full with this policy;
- ensure that any complaints of discrimination, victimisation or harassment (including against themselves) are dealt with appropriately and are not suppressed or disregarded.

4. What the law says

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination in employment or in the provision of training and education on the grounds of any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Staff and students are protected in all aspects of the employment, education and/or training relationship, which includes: recruitment and selection, employment terms and conditions, promotion, transfers, access to benefits, appraisal/annual review, assessment of performance, dismissal and post-termination (such as providing references).

5. What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sex, gender reassignment or sexual orientation (these are called Protected Characteristics). It is also not permissible to treat someone less favourably because they belong to a trade union. Discrimination on the grounds of any Protected Characteristic is prohibited by law, even if unintentional, unless a particular exception applies.

5.1 Direct discrimination

Direct Discrimination is less favourable treatment on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Examples would include refusing a woman a job as a chauffeur because of a belief that women are not good drivers or restricting recruitment to persons under 40 because you want to have a young and dynamic workforce.

5.2 Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is the application of a policy, criterion or practice to someone which the employer would apply to others but which is such that:

- It is detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person represents;
- The employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on an objective basis; and
- The person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.

An example would be a requirement for job candidates to have ten years' experience in a particular role, since this will be harder for young people to satisfy. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

5.3 Victimisation

Victimisation means treating a person less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination or have provided information in connection with a complaint or because they are suspected of doing or being about to do so.

5.4 Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct which is related to a Protected Characteristic and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them; or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them (sexual harassment); or less favourable treatment because of the rejection of or the submission to sexual harassment.

Harassment can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess a Protected Characteristic but is perceived to have it (for example, when a person is harassed because they are - wrongly - believed to be gay) or associates with other people who possess a Protected Characteristic (for example, because they have a spouse who is Muslim).

Other important points to note about harassment:

- a single incident can amount to harassment;
- behaviour that has continued for a long period without complaint can amount to harassment;
- it is not necessary for an individual to intend to harass someone for their behaviour to amount to harassment;
- it is not necessary for an individual to communicate that behaviour is unwelcome before it amounts to harassment; and`
- the onus is on each individual to be certain that their behaviour and conduct is appropriate and is not unwanted: if in doubt, don’t do it.

5.5 Disability discrimination

It is not permitted to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person. Disability includes any physical or mental impairment which substantially affects the ability to perform day to day activities and has lasted (or is likely to last) more than 12 months. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to the service, or the ability to be employed, trained or promoted, as a non-disabled person. This also applies to volunteering opportunities.

Rainbow Haven has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment or volunteering role of a disabled person. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Adjustments to premises
- Reallocating some of the employee's or volunteer's duties
- Transferring the disabled person to a role better suited to their disability
- Giving the disabled person time off work for medical treatment or mentoring
- Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction or training manuals
- Any other reasonable and necessary adjustments

Disclosure of information about a disability should be treated in confidence and handled sensitively, to ensure the person is treated with dignity and respect for their privacy.

6. Exceptions - Genuine Occupational Requirements

There are limited exemptions to discrimination legislation. Thus where the particular sex, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or other belief of an employee is required for a specific job, that characteristic may amount to a Genuine Occupational Requirement.

There must be a clear connection between the duties of the post in question and the characteristics required. An example of a Genuine Occupational Requirement might be the need to recruit a female worker for a women's shelter.

7. Making employment decisions fairly

Rainbow Haven will recruit employees and make other employment decisions (eg promotion, training, dismissal) on the basis of objective criteria.

Specific criteria or conditions for employment decisions (including job selection, promotion and redundancy) must be on a legitimate need and not go further than is required to satisfy that need. *(See RH13 - Recruitment for more detailed information)*.

Recruitment

Rainbow Haven is committed to recruiting staff and volunteers in ways that promote diversity and challenge discrimination. We will encourage applications from groups who are traditionally discriminated against in staff recruitment. This includes consideration of how and where posts are advertised and the format in which job application information is available. All person specifications and job descriptions will refer to the equalities agenda and it is expected that all staff will be committed to this policy and to any appropriate training.

Trustees and staff involved in recruitment must:

- specify only recruitment criteria that are relevant to the job, reflect genuine needs and are proportionate. More than one person should be involved in shortlisting of applicants wherever practicable;
- ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse audience and avoid informal recruitment methods that exclude fair competition.
- review job advertisements carefully to ensure that stereotyping is avoided and that particular groups are not unjustifiably discouraged from applying;

- not ask applicants about health or disability before a job offer is made (other than in exceptional circumstances and after having been approved by the Operations Manager or Trustee. If necessary, a job offer can be conditional upon satisfactorily passing a medical check.)
- not ask candidates about any Protected Characteristic if the question may demonstrate an intention to discriminate.
- not make assumptions about immigration status based on appearance, accent or apparent nationality;
- so far as reasonably practicable, keep a written record of their reasons for relevant decisions.

Rainbow Haven is legally required to verify that all employees have the right to work in the UK and to undertake the specific role for which they are being recruited. Prior to starting employment, all employees must produce original documents to prove this, irrespective of nationality.

All employment contracts and working conditions will reflect anti-discrimination legislation and include, for example, arrangements for childcare, parental leave, carer and sickness leave.

Monitoring

As part of our recruitment process, we will endeavour to monitor all applicants':

- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnic group
- Disability
- Religion
- Age

We do this to assess the effectiveness of our measures to promote equal opportunities and to help us identify and take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination, under-representation and potential disadvantage and improve diversity. Provision of this information is voluntary and the information will be kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated here. The information will not be used as part of any decision-making process relating to the recruitment or employment of the person providing the information. Our recruitment policies must be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure people are being treated fairly and according to ability and merit.

Discipline and termination of employment

Any redundancy selection criteria and procedures that are used, or other decisions taken to terminate employment, will be not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

Disciplinary procedures and penalties will be applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Part-time and fixed-term staff will be treated the same as full-time or permanent staff of the same position and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (pro-rata, where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

8. Service delivery

Rainbow Haven aims to make its services accessible to all sections of the community. We aim to ensure that our services do not discriminate against anyone and are inclusive and accessible. Any individual should be able to use Rainbow Haven's services without fear of discrimination.

In developing our services, we aim to take a positive and proactive approach to anti-discriminatory practice, and to promote understanding and awareness of different groups, and to engage with issues about equality, rights and responsibilities.

It is expected that all staff and volunteers will positively challenge discriminatory attitudes or behaviour wherever they witness or are made aware of it. Where the discrimination has serious implications for an individual or group, it should be brought to the attention of the Operations Manager or TEMCA Board.

Where a Rainbow Haven service user alleges discrimination on the part of a member of staff, volunteer or other service user, this must be taken seriously. The individual should be informed of their right to use the Complaints process *(RH-02 Complaints).*

9. What to do if you encounter discrimination

If you believe that you have been the victim of discrimination, employees should follow the Rainbow Haven's Grievance Procedure *(see **RH09** - Grievance)*. All other workers should use ***RH02*** *– Complaints.*

Everyone connected with Rainbow Haven (staff, volunteers, Trustees) has a responsibility to combat discrimination if they encounter it. Anyone observing or aware of acts that they believe amount to discrimination directed should report these to the Operations Manager or a Trustee *(see **RH02** - Complaints and **RH19** - Whistleblowing).*

Any report of discrimination will be kept confidential so far as this is practicable. We may ask you if you wish your complaint(s) to be put to the alleged discriminator, if disciplinary action appears to be appropriate. It sometimes may be necessary to disclose the complaint or take action even if this is not in line with your wishes, but we will seek to protect you from victimisation and, if you wish, we will seek to protect your identity. You should be aware that disciplinary action may be impossible without your co-operation or if you refuse to allow relevant information to be disclosed.

Staff who raise a complaint about or report discrimination in good faith will be protected from retaliation or victimisation. Making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith is a misconduct offence and will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary policy *(RH-06 Disciplinary policy*). Anyone attempting acts of retaliation or victimisation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

If you make a complaint, it may be necessary to ask you to stay at home on paid leave while investigations are being conducted and the matter is being dealt with through the appropriate procedure. This may particularly be necessary in cases of alleged harassment.

10. Non-compliance

Any breach of equal opportunities rules or failure to comply with this policy will be taken very seriously and is likely to result in disciplinary action against the offender, up to and including immediate dismissal (***RH06*** *- Disciplinary Policy* for details).

Rainbow Haven reserves the right to withhold support and resources and to sever association with any person or organisation that actively and consciously discriminates against any group or individual after warnings and information about our policy have been given.

11. Further information

Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)
Website: https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/
Phone: 0808 800 0082
Textphone: 0808 800 0084

You can email using the contact form on the EASS website. Also available through the website are BSL interpretation, web chat services and a Contact Us form.