



## Us Equality and Diversity Policy & Procedure

Originator:	Chief Operating Officer
Last Reviewed:	June 2022
Next Review:	June 2023
Superseded Docs:	US Equality and Diversity Policy
Distribution:	Internal and External
Storage:	US One Drive / Policies

### Policy

#### Values Statement

##### 1.1 Equalities Statement

Us believes that every individual possesses the same innate, equal value and worth. We will therefore seek to treat all people with dignity, respect and compassion at all times and in all aspects of the organisation. We will also recognise and value the diverse contributions that all individuals can make.

Us is an equal opportunity employer and young people's charity and is fully committed to a policy of treating all of its employees, job applicants, contractors, volunteers and community equally. Us aims to provide an environment free from any form of harassment, intimidation, victimisation or unjustifiable discrimination. We recognise the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to not discriminate based on the following factors:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

#### Our Team

Us will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, and selection for redundancy and

dismissal. Us will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications without regard to protected characteristics.

US will contract with our providers on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications without regard to protected characteristics.

### **Our Community**

US is committed to providing services to our community - young people, parents and carers and referral partners - which embrace diversity and that promote equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our participants, colleagues and partners.

Our services need to be accessible by all, and to do this we will remove barriers that prevent young people from engaging through person-centred planning approaches and young person-led decision making. These principles provide a framework enabling US to deliver the right support to individuals, but also ensures that equality and diversity are also at the centre of strategic decision making.

## **2.0 Introduction and Commitment**

2.1 Us will ensure that no person or group applying for a service or contracts with the organisation will be treated less favourably than any other person or group on the grounds of the protected characteristics listed above and detailed in the Equality Act 2010 or is disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Us will also ensure that no one applying for employment, volunteering or contracting with the organisation will be treated less favourably than any other person or group on all the above mentioned grounds and conditions except where the staff posts and/or role within the organisation can be shown to have an occupational requirement (OR) e.g. where the nature of the role is such that it requires the post holder to be of a specific gender. Us is aware of its responsibilities as a service provider and employer and will act to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and the Commission for Race Equality Code of Practice.

2.2 In the provision of services to our communities and in the employment of its staff, volunteers and contractors Us will ensure that our policies, procedures and practices provide fair and equal treatment for all. We acknowledge the value that a diversity of people, both participants and employees, brings value to the organisation.

2.3 Information for our communities, staff, volunteers and contractors will be made available in other languages and/or formats where reasonable and possible and necessary to meet people's needs.

## **3.0 Responsibility**

3.1 The Us Board has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that Us operates in a non-discriminatory way. It will ensure that policies are kept up to date with relevant legislation.

- 3.2 Chief Operating Officer has the lead role of ensuring this Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented. It is, however, the responsibility of every Board member, employee, volunteer and contractor to reflect this policy in their personal conduct. The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for ongoing monitoring and review of the policy.
- 3.3 It is the responsibility of all trustees, employees, volunteers, and contractors to implement this policy. Employees are required to do this through the signing of their contract of employment, contractors through their order.
- 3.4 Us recognises that the effectiveness of its policies depends upon the Board, staff, volunteers and contractors putting the policy into practice. All employees are required to read, understand and agree to the Equality and Diversity Policy during their Induction with Us.
- 3.5 All employees are responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with this policy and have a duty to co-operate with Us to make sure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Us will not condone or tolerate any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees, community members or by outside third parties who do business with Us, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Action will be taken under the disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this Equality and Diversity policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence. Community members may be excluded from activities and services provided by Us.

Employees should draw the attention of your line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment or bullying. Employees must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct in accordance with Us's disciplinary procedure. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Us will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment against its employees or community members.

#### **4.0 Monitoring**

- 4.1 Us will collect and analyse statistical data to consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices and service delivery. If changes are required we will implement them. Us will also make reasonable adjustments to its

standard working practices and service delivery in order to facilitate involvement by everyone in the community.

- 4.2 When reasonable and possible, staff will be required to attend Equality and Diversity Training.

## Procedure

### 5.0 Scope

This procedure is intended to cover all areas of Us's services and employment.

### 6.0 Identification of Discrimination

#### 6.1 Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics, a job applicant or an employee is treated less favourably than other job applicants or employees are treated or would be treated.

The treatment will still amount to direct discrimination even if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the job applicant or employee is associated (associative discrimination) and not on the job applicant's or employee's own protected characteristic. In addition, it can include cases where it is perceived that a job applicant or an employee has a particular protected characteristic when in fact they do not (perceptive discrimination)

Us will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of employment.

#### 6.2 Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all job applicants or employees but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial group.

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is applied to the job applicant or employee a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) which is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicant's or employee's. A PCP is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicant's or employees if:

- it is applied, or would be applied, to persons with whom the job applicant or employee does not share the protected characteristic
- the PCP puts, or would put, persons with whom the job applicant or employee shares the protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom the job applicant or employee does not share it
- it puts, or would put, the job applicant or employee at that disadvantage, and
- it cannot be shown by Us to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Us will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of employment.

## 7.0 Processes

### 7.1 Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant experience, abilities and qualifications. Us is committed to applying its equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection. Advertisements will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people. Us will ensure that the widest cross-section of applicants become aware of job vacancies, and will include Equalities Statements in all job advertisements. When advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, Us will, as far as reasonably practicable:

1. Ensure advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
2. Avoid setting any unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
3. Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular protected characteristic.

However, where, having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular protected characteristic is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, Us will apply that requirement to the job role and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. All applications will be processed in the same way. The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. All monitoring and non-essential details will be removed from the application form before the shortlisting process begins. Person specifications and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Reasons for selection and rejection of shortlisted candidates will be recorded and retained for 12 months after the shortlisting process.

Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers and asked the same set of questions. All questions asked of the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job. The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question.

With applicants with a disability, Us will have regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to attend interviews and other recruitment events, work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the person with a disability is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who do not have a disability.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

We will be open to flexible work patterns and job sharing where it is workable within business priorities.

## 7.2 Training and promotion

Line managers will be responsible for ensuring they actively promote equal opportunity when undertaking their duties.

A record will be kept of all Equality and Diversity training offered by Us.

Where a promotional system is in operation, it will not be discriminatory. When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular protected characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, the promotional system will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

## 7.3 Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

## 7.4 Equal pay

Us is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the organisation will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

## 8 Action

Should there be any evidence of unreasonable under representation of any particular client group within these statistics the issue will be investigated by the Chief Operating Officer. If necessary, it is the responsibility of the Chief Operating Officer that an action plan be drawn up with the aim of redressing an imbalance. The action plan will detail what the area of concern is, what action is recommended to address the issue, how this will be monitored, reported and whom by and a specific timescale for implementation.

In accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy any discriminating behaviour occurs this will be logged, discussed and any necessary actions agreed with the Chief Operating Officer.

If staff witness or believe themselves a victim of discrimination they should report it to their line manager or their line manager's line manager.

## 9.0 Rationale

- 9.1 Us believes each individual is of equal worth and value.
- 9.2 Us is an Equal Opportunities employer
- 9.3 Us will strive to ensure that all its services and recruitment processes are operated in a non-discriminatory manner.
- 9.4 Any discriminatory practice will be addressed as soon as it is apparent.
- 9.5 Us staff will be supported to deal with, and report, discriminatory behaviour.