



# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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## 1) Introduction

We are committed to building an organisation where everyone feels they belong. This means:

- being fair, impartial and providing equal employment opportunities
- recognising, respecting and celebrating our differences
- creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers.

## 2) EDI in employment

We are committed to being an equal opportunities employer and oppose all forms of unlawful discrimination. We believe that individuals should be treated on their merits and that employment-related decisions should be based on objective job-related criteria such as aptitude and skills. For these reasons, all employees and particularly managers with responsibility for employment-related decisions, must comply with the policies described below.

### The Law

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against employees and other workers because of sex, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, race (including national origin and nationality), religion or belief, disability and age. These are known as 'protected characteristics'. The law divides discrimination into four broad categories:



- a) **Direct Discrimination** – involves treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic (for example not promoting an individual because of his or her race or sexual orientation). It includes discrimination because of perceptions or assumptions about a person's characteristics, even if these are incorrect (for example, not promoting an individual because he is assumed to be gay). It also includes discrimination because a person associates with someone who has a protected characteristic (for example, not promoting an individual because her or she has a disabled child). Direct discrimination cannot be justified (with the exception of age discrimination in specific circumstances).
- b) **Indirect Discrimination** – occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice is applied across all groups, but this would put those with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared with others who do not share that characteristic (for example imposing a requirement that candidates for promotion be over six foot tall, which would particularly disadvantage women). Indirect discrimination will not be unlawful if it can be justified.
- c) **Harassment** – is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic or of a sexual nature what has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for that individual.
- d) **Victimisation** – involves subjecting a person to a detriment because he or she has complained about discrimination or assisted somebody in doing so.

The law does not distinguish between whether the conduct was intentional or deliberate or not, only that it took place.

It's unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly during recruitment or employment because of a protected characteristic. Discrimination after employment can also be unlawful. For example, it's unlawful to refuse someone a reference for a reason linked to a protected characteristic. It's also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user when providing services or goods, or to fail to make reasonable adjustments.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

A reasonable adjustment is a change to remove or reduce the effect of:

- an employee's disability so they can do their job
- a job applicant's disability when applying for a job.



What's deemed 'reasonable' will depend on the circumstances of each case DCC will always seek to go beyond the statutory minimum and would encourage everyone to take steps and make requests which would help you to work more effectively.

### **Our commitment to prospective and current employees**

We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment
- promotion
- opportunities for training
- pay and benefits
- discipline
- selection for redundancy.

As far as possible, we'll aim to remove or reduce any substantial disadvantage a disabled employee or job applicant faces, which would not be faced by a non-disabled person.

We'll provide information and guidance to staff involved in recruitment or other roles where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise. We're committed to helping people in these roles understand their responsibilities and avoid the risk of discrimination.

### **3) EDI in service delivery**

We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality and diversity within service delivery. This applies to all interactions with DCC's clients, and we will proactively seek to address any issues of potential discrimination in the provision of services.

As a provider of services, we treat all clients equally and fairly and do not unlawfully discriminate against them. We also, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity in relation to access to the legal services that we provide, taking account of the diversity of the communities that we serve, to ensure that, subject to funding constraints, our services are accessible to all clients.



## **Access to services to support carers**

We will ensure that services are provided in a way that means all carers can access them. We will take the following steps to try to eliminate potential discrimination in service delivery. We take steps to make sure that we make reasonable adjustments in providing access to services. This may involve steps such as:

- Using text type services for hearing impaired clients.
- Offering video calls as an alternative to phone calls, where there is a disability access need.
- Working with third party suppliers where there is a need for a language interpreters or sign language interpreters.
- Allowing third parties to support clients at appointments.
- Enabling captions on MS teams meetings for support groups.

In addition to any issues that are raised by clients DCC will also take a proactive approach to service delivery. We will ensure that referral partners and referrals are monitored to ensure that we are able to reach a diverse and representative range of carers.

We will collect and review demographic data to ensure that we reach a broad cross section of carers. We will collect and monitor data including the carer's age, gender, if they have an illness or disability and their ethnicity to support this process.

## **Commitment to inclusive communications**

We will seek to communicate in writing or verbally in ways that best support the widest range of individual access needs and preferences. Some examples of how we will do this are:

- Use a legible font size in letters and emails and provide large text or other accessible formats when someone asks for them.
- Write in simple plain English avoiding jargon and technical terms wherever possible.
- Add descriptive alt text for images where that is possible.
- Use simple colours with good contrast and plain background.
- Ensure we use inclusive language and imagery in all communications.
- Avoid italics, underlining, and unusually shaped letters in letters or other written communications.

- Commit to maintaining a Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Level AA standard of accessibility across our website

This is not an exhaustive list of all the actions that DCC will take. Where a client raises an issue of accessibility, as far as possible, a tailored and specific solution should be offered. The person with protected characteristics is the best expert in their own needs and DCC staff should ensure that listen and respond to what they say about the best way to support them.

#### **4) Training**

All staff at DCC will receive training on EDI as part of their Learning and Development Plan. This will include organisation wide sessions, alongside any training needs identified specific to individual roles. Training needs in relation to EDI will be assessed annually.

#### **5) Our collective responsibility**

All staff and volunteers are responsible for supporting our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. If you see or experience something you disagree with at work, please let your manager or a member of SLT know.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for acts of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with in line with our disciplinary procedure. These acts may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

#### **6) Monitoring and reviewing this policy**

We'll review this policy periodically and update it if the law changes. Any information job applicants and employees provide for monitoring purposes will only be used for these purposes, and will be handled in line with data protection legislation.



We will seek feedback from clients through questionnaires around the barriers to services and act on feedback. Where the service is failing to deliver equal access, prompt action will be taken to address barriers to accessing services or any issues around service delivery. Any issues raised will be reviewed by SLT, with a view to identifying trends and suitable actions to be implemented.

## **7) Other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Recruitment policy
- Learning and development policy
- Pay policy
- Staff handbook – see Reasonable Adjustments, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Capability Policy and Procedure, and Leaving Dementia Carers Count.