



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Scope of policy: All employees and apprentices

Approved by:

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / Trustees March 2026

Next Review Date: March 2027

1. Our Aim

In carrying out its functions as a charity, inspire+ is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all, and to ensure that no individual is discriminated against in the planning and delivery of any of our activities. We therefore aim to ensure that the values of equality, diversity, and respect for all are embedded into everything that we do.

2. About Our Policy

This policy is intended to demonstrate the commitment of inspire+ to eliminating discrimination and encouraging and valuing diversity among staff, apprentices, volunteers, partners, suppliers, users of our services and trustees.

We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and are committed to meeting them in full. We believe in a culture that embraces equality and values diversity will help us to ensure that everyone feels involved and included in our plans, programmes and activities.

We aim to create an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour is tolerated by anyone towards anyone. This particularly applies in relation to the 'protected characteristics' named in the Equality Act 2010:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, income, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, (see below for explanations).

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity are at the heart of this policy.

- 'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.
- 'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution.
- 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce.
- 'Equity' means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

As an organisation which delivers services for public authorities, the Charity is aware of the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and is guided by its three 'aims'.

3. Our Responsibilities

inspire+ understands that for equality to be achieved this policy needs to be made understandable to, promoted to, and embraced by staff, apprentices, volunteers, suppliers, partners, residents, users of our services and trustees.

The policy is fully supported and welcomed by all employees and has been agreed by our Board of Trustees and reviewed annually.

All staff, apprentices, volunteers, suppliers, partners and trustees have a responsibility to ensure that their own language and actions are consistent with the spirit as well as the contents of this policy.

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with inspire+ Chief Executive Officer.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Charity.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Resource Manager.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure.

Our Commitments

Inspire+ recognises that a policy alone is not enough to ensure that equality and diversity and inclusion are central to everything that we do.

We will seek to create an environment in which diversity and the contributions of all staff, volunteers, suppliers, partners, users of our services and trustees are recognised and valued in all that we do.

We recognise that many people are unfamiliar with the ways in which discrimination and disadvantage affect people's health, well-being and quality of life. We will therefore support people to develop equalities awareness and understanding.

To ensure that we are meeting the aims and the spirit of this policy the Charity will:

- Discuss and review how well we are implementing this policy, and (adjust our practices/develop an action plan) where necessary.
- Assess any significant new or revised policies and procedures for their impact on equality.
- Embed equality and diversity into our development and improvement plans to promote and ensure engagement towards the policy.
- Ensure our employment practices and procedures are consistent with the aims of this policy by conducting training on equality and diversity issues and how to implement the policy.
- Ensure that the charity has in place a BAME independent complaints officer to ensure that any complaints are swiftly investigated and dealt with according to the inspire+ code of conduct policy.

Working with contractors, suppliers and partners

It is important to us that suppliers, contractors and any other individual or organisation working with or on behalf of inspire+ are aware of and agree to comply with this policy while that work is underway. When working with these groups this policy will be referred to and considered. The Charity may withdraw and cease operating with employers, contractors, supplies and partners who do not adhere to our high equality and diversity standards. In addition, we are committed to:

- using accessible venues for events and meetings;
- using plain English, and offering accessible communications, for example, emails, letters, reports and publicity materials as far as it is within our means to do so.

Review and Action

We recognise that it is important for us to regularly review this policy to ensure that it reflects up to date equality legislation and best practice.

A review of this policy will be carried out on a bi-annual basis as a minimum and any necessary actions taken.

Equal opportunity policy statements

Age: An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that people are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

Disability: A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities. If we feel that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will discuss this with you and try to find an alternative solution where possible
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation
- If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate
- We will keep the physical features of our premises under review to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

Gender reassignment: A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

We will:

- provide support to prevent discrimination against transgender people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership: A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

- A person who is engaged to be married is not married and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.
- A divorcee or a person whose civil partnership has been dissolved is not married or in a civil partnership and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity regardless of marriage or civil partnership status
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged as a result of their marriage or civil partnership status.

Race: Race is defined as

- Colour: e.g. includes being black or white. Nationality: e.g. includes being a British, Australian or Swiss citizen.
- Ethnic or national origins: e.g. include being from a Roma background or of Chinese heritage. A racial group could be “black Britons” which would encompass those people who are both black and British citizens.

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents
- actively promote race equality and inclusion in the organisation
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Religion or belief: Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

- A religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief, such as Protestants and Catholics within Christianity.
- A belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief. A “philosophical belief” must
 - Be genuinely held;
 - Be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available;
 - Be a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour;
 - Attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance;
 - Be worthy of respect in a democratic society, compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Any cult involved in illegal activities is not covered. Beliefs such as humanism and atheism would be covered.

We will:

- ensure that employees’ religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible

- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Sex:

This protected characteristic refers to an individual's biological sex and protection is afforded where there is:

- a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a man or to a woman;
- a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same sex.

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about gender
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Sexual orientation:

This is a person's sexual orientation towards:

- people of the same sex as him or her (in other words the person is a gay man or a lesbian)
- people of the opposite sex from him or her (the person is heterosexual)
- people of both sexes (the person is bisexual).

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQ+ communities
- promote positive images of the LGBTQ+ communities
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the LGBTQ+ communities
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Equal pay

We will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Part time and fixed term work

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