

Equality & Diversity Policy

1.) Introduction

At the BDD Foundation, we are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We believe that every individual should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. As a charity, we recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experience bring unique ideas and perspectives and we wish to encourage and harness these differences. We recognise that this will enhance our effectiveness in carrying out our work, and creates an environment where everyone, whether staff, volunteers, trustees, service users or partners, feel valued and empowered.

We will foster a supportive and inclusive culture for:

- All those who need and use our services
- Our volunteers
- Our staff
- Other stakeholders
- Our partners

2.) Our Commitment

In line with the Equality Act 2010, The BDD Foundation is committed to ensuring that no job applicant, volunteer, staff member or service user is discriminated against directly, indirectly, by association or perception because of disability, gender (including transgender/ gender reassignment), race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status or civil partnership, responsibility for dependents, sexuality, pregnancy or maternity, age, trade union activity, political or religious, agnostic or atheist beliefs and (unrelated to the post) criminal convictions.

We actively work to create an inclusive environment for our staff, volunteers, service users, and partners, ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all. By embedding equality and diversity into our culture, policies, and practices, we commit to challenging discrimination, removing barriers, and providing a welcoming and respectful space for everyone.

The BDD Foundation recognises the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and fairness, and challenging discrimination. We are committed to ensuring that we treat all our people with dignity and respect and will not tolerate any form of harassment, victimisation or discriminatory behaviour.

Staff and volunteers will be supported to challenge unwanted behaviours. This policy statement will feature in appropriate BDD Foundation publications and be made available to all new staff and volunteers. The Charity will keep its policies under review and will implement changes where these could improve equality of opportunity. This commitment applies to all the Charity's employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically connected with equal opportunities and diversity.

Service Users

We will ensure, as far as possible that service users:

- Are able to access our services in ways that suit them.
- Have their needs listened to, and met as far as possible.
- Are given help that is relevant to their problem and situation.
- Are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and without discrimination.

Staff and Volunteers

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will continually take steps to ensure that:

- We endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates possible.
- Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit.
- Where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applicants from all sections of society and especially from those underrepresented in the workforce.
- Where appropriate and necessary, lawful exemption (genuine occupation requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups.
- All staff are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Selection for all training and career development opportunities will be purely on the basis of merit and organisational priorities.

3.) Policy Statements

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; and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

Disability

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation.

Race

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the Charity.

Gender

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

Sexual Orientation

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQ+ communities; and
- promote positive images of the LGBTQ+ communities.

Religion or Belief

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Pregnancy or Maternity

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity during pregnancy and during maternity leave;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about pregnancy and maternity leave; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged as a result of pregnancy or maternity leave and that we take account of the needs of our employees during pregnancy and during maternity leave.

Marriage or Civil Partnership

We will:

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

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

4.) Responsibilities

Trustees & Leadership

Trustees and senior leadership are expected to uphold and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring that all policies, decisions, and practices align with the Equality Act 2010 and actively promote an inclusive environment. This includes leading by example, embedding equality into governance and strategic planning, and ensuring that discrimination, harassment, or exclusion are not tolerated. Additionally, they are responsible for addressing any concerns or complaints related to equality and diversity in a fair, transparent, and effective way.

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers play an important role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in their day-to-day work. Staff and volunteers must be aware of and comply with the Equality Act 2010, actively challenging discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment when they encounter it. Additionally, staff and volunteers are expected to report any concerns related to inequality, discrimination, or harassment, ensuring that issues are addressed appropriately.

Managers are responsible for promoting this policy and ensuring it is understood and complied with. Managers are expected to be proactive in identifying circumstances in which elements of the policy can benefit individual members of staff and encourage and support staff in making use of such benefits. All staff are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues.

Service Users and Partners

Service users and partners of the BDD Foundation are expected to treat staff, volunteers, and one another with respect, in line with our above commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

5.) Complaints

The Charity will treat seriously all complaints under this policy made by staff, volunteers, service users or other third parties and will take appropriate action. The charity will follow the procedure outlined in the Complaints Policy document to deal with any complaints related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The Charity does, however, encourage staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. Whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

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