

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

When we say “we” “our” or “us” we are referring to all UKCoD trustees/SIG members, staff and our deaf organisational members and individuals as part of our network.

Glossary:

Beneficiaries are intended as those who benefit from the charity’s work, as defined by the charity’s purpose.

Staff include all individuals employed by the charity and those working through contractors and third-party agencies.

A volunteer is anyone who spends time, unpaid, doing something that furthers the charity’s purpose.

Diversity & inclusion statement

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way UKCoD works. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background and make best use of their talents. We are guided by our values in everything we do and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive trustee board, employer and Special Interest Group member helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference for deaf people. We seek to develop an environment where we treat all stakeholders as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination should it ever arise.

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the UK Council on Deafness: that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application and to cooperate actively to make the environment we desire a reality. We will continue to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in our everyday activities, roles and functions

1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out UKCoD’s aims to be an inclusive organisation and its approach to equality and diversity and commitment:

- to promoting equality and diversity;
- promoting a culture that actively values difference;
- recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the charity and enhance the way we work;
- to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development of employees and all volunteers (trustees and SIG members);
- to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination;
- to create environments free from harassment and discrimination, where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to UKCoD’s work.

2. Equality and diversity at UKCoD

We consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services.



We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but to our organisation. UKCoD recognises that people from different backgrounds bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative and more beneficial to us.

UKCoD will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity, innovation and good practice to bring benefits to individuals and deaf communities.

We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

3. Scope

We each have personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of employee and volunteers' induction, they are expected to:

- read and familiarise yourself with this policy;
- ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with;
- complete the declaration below (page 5).

Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action as stated in the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

4. UKCoD's commitment

Every person involved in UKCoD is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all.

UKCoD is committed to all the people it works with to contribute to an environment in which all involved feel comfortable in expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued as individuals.

Nor will such a person be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This principle applies to recruitment, training (formal or informal), benefits, facilities, procedures and terms and conditions of employment for staff.

The way in which we work and learn within UKCoD reflects both the mission and objectives of UKCoD and the spirit and intention of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

UKCoD will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that they are able to play a full and active part in UKCoD's work.

UKCoD will deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers and disempowerment to individuals.



UKCoD will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against staff or any volunteer on the grounds of a protected characteristic:

- sex;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
- disability including mental health, deafness, and deaf people with additional needs;
- sexual orientation;
- religion and or belief;
- age.

In addition UKCoD recognises that various situations impact on protected characteristics, i.e

- Social class;
- employment status;
- unrelated criminal convictions;
- union activities – staff allowed representation.

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated. Employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of developmental opportunities identified by the board. Selection for employment or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If it is believed that discrimination has taken place because of any of the above protected characteristics, the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution should be considered by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or volunteer in a relevant position of seniority.

Another alternative is to raise the matter through UKCoD's Harassment Policy or Grievance Policy.

For types of discrimination see the Annex to this policy (page 6).

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure, and all should feel confident to inform if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

UKCoD will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under UKCoD's Grievance and Discipline Policy, perpetrators may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

5. When does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all conduct whilst furthering the charity's purpose and also to conduct outside UKCoD that is related to your work or voluntary contributions (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on UKCoD's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to UKCoD).

Some specific areas of application:

a) Recruitment

Selection for employment at UKCoD will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Further detail is set out in the staff handbook and associated policies. We will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of its recruitment processes to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

b) Training and development

You may also be required to participate in training and development activities to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy. Through our interaction with members and other activities, UKCoD will ensure that those we work with know our statements of policy.

UKCoD states that staff and volunteers to be aware of the less obvious and insidious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, attitudes, interests and characteristics of individuals. It is important to request clarification or training.

c) During employment

The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

6. Legal duties

UKCoD is subject to the Equality Act 2010, which drives the Equality and Diversity policy.

7. Reviews

UKCoD is committed to reviewing this policy on a regular basis as determined by the board of trustees. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

A trustee with responsibility for Equality and Diversity will:

- ensure that proper records of allegations of malpractice and the following decisions are maintained and consistent with this policy;

- any amendments to this policy or additions are cascaded to employees, trustees and other volunteers in the UK Council on Deafness;
- review and approve policies, procedures and practices that impact on equal opportunities and diversity in practice.

Types of discrimination

There are various types of discrimination prohibited by this policy. The main types are:

1) Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic set out in this policy.

Other types of direct discrimination are:

- **Associative discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against someone because they associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- **Perceptive discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic.

It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

2) Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied, which appears to be the same for all, but which has a disproportionate, adverse, effect on one group of people. This is discrimination even though there was no intention to discriminate.

3) Victimization

Victimization is where a volunteer or employee is treated less favourably than others because they have asserted legal rights against UKCoD or assisted a volunteer or colleague in doing so. For example, victimisation may occur where a genuine grievance has been raised against UKCoD and the aggrieved person is suspended as a result.

4) Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.”

Harassment means repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an employee or volunteer or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment.

It is important to remember that it is not the intention of the harasser but how the recipient perceives their behaviour, which determines whether harassment has occurred.

Please see UKCoD's Harassment Policy, for further details of how UKCOD will deal with bullying and harassment.

Anyone who acts as a whistleblower on such activity outlined above must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals: see UKCoD's Whistleblowing Policy.

UPDATED - January 2021.

This policy has been in operation since October 2013.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY DECLARATION: I have read and understood UKCoD's Equality and Diversity Policy and agree to work and volunteer to the expected standards. Regardless of my background and circumstances, I agree to treat all colleagues and visitors with respect and dignity while carrying out the duties and responsibilities of my role at UKCoD.

Signature.....

Date..... Print name

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PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE MANAGER.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-and-diversity-policy>

**Agreed by the UKCoD Board on the Board meeting held on 24.02.2021;
Approved and minuted.**