



Support for Young People
Affected by Crime

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Context:

SAFE! is a charity that provides support to young people and families affected by crime, abuse and bullying in the Thames Valley.

Purpose:

SAFE! is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all we do.

Being a workplace where equality, diversity and inclusion are celebrated meaningfully will see us attract the best talent in terms of our staff and volunteers. Diversity of skills, ideas, experiences and perspectives will mean greater opportunities for productivity, innovation and creativity and overall employee satisfaction. We want to have a workforce which is truly representative of the service users we support and society generally, meaning that every individual feels welcomed, valued, respected and supported to achieve their best. We know that discrimination and inequalities exist in our society which can favour some individuals and create barriers for others: we want to be pro-active in the ways that we recognise, respond and challenge.

The purpose of this policy is to set out:

- The tangible ways that we will convey our values around equality, diversity and inclusion and clearly set our expectations.
- The actions we will take to recognise and challenge any discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment in the recruitment, retention, training and development of workers and volunteers, or the experiences of our service users and partners through contact with SAFE!.

Definitions and legislation:

Equality is grounded in principles of anti-discrimination and fairness. Discrimination is illegal and it is morally wrong, and can include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation.

The Equality Act (2010) affords legal safeguards to individuals with '*protected characteristics*' from being treated unfairly because of their protected characteristic/s. The '*protected characteristics*' enshrined in law are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The Human Rights Act (1998) incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights (1952) into UK domestic law. Article 14 specifically relates to right to protection from discrimination on the grounds of 'race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.'

SAFE! recognises that individuals should not be treated the same, but rather treated according to their own situation and their needs, whilst acknowledging where there can be disadvantages in terms of accessibility of opportunity which requires 'reasonable adjustments' under such circumstances.

We understand that everyone is unique and there are not homogenous groups, therefore a person's identity is not reduced to protected characteristic/s or a unidimensional concept. The various elements of a person's identity result in a unique intersectionality, which must be considered in our approach to diversity and inclusion.

Diversity means recognising, respecting, and celebrating everyone's differences, valuing each person as unique and distinct. It should include respect for 'protected characteristics' but also means accepting and celebrating a diverse range of learning styles, perspectives, and views. It also means having an awareness of unconscious biases and being prepared to reflect on these and make changes, in the pursuit of truly valuing diversity. Valuing diversity also involves the demonstrable inclusion of employees and service users through having policies, procedures and practices that take their diverse needs and preferences into account.

Inclusion can be defined as the extent to which everyone, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstance, feels valued, accepted, and supported.

How SAFE! delivers on our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion:

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is the framework where we build upon this Policy. The EDI Champions Group meet on a quarterly basis to review one specific areas of the strategy within each meeting. The strategy document is reviewed and updated on an annual basis within the EDI Champions group.

Responsibility:

Overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and the EDI strategy lies with the CEO and Trustees, with support from SMT, the EDI Lead and the EDI Champions. However, it is the responsibility of every individual involved in the charity to eliminate discrimination and all employees have a duty to do everything they can to ensure the practical application of this policy.

Related Policies and documents:

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 to 2025

SAFE! Business Plan and One Page Strategy 2024/25

Health and Safety Policy

Grievance Policy

Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

Recruitment Policy

Further advice and Resources:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's website includes guidance and good practice to help you understand and use Equality Act law. There is guidance for managers, employees, service users and service providers.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's website also includes Statutory Codes of Practice which provide more detailed explanations of the Act in relation to employment matters EHRC - Equality Act Codes of Practice.

Reviewing:

This policy is subject to an annual review and any additional regular review to reflect, for example, changes in legislation or to the structure of policies of SAFE!

This policy is next due for review in July 2025