

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Document Owner: Human Resources

Signed off by: Lindy Shufflebotham

Date last reviewed:	23/04/2024	
Due date for next review:	30/04/2025	
Policy consultation with:	Exec team, staff consultation - Workplace	
Legal Requirements:	ACAS Guidance, Equality Act 2010	
CQC:		
Other:		
Related Policies:	Data Protection Policy and Procedure	Grievance policy
	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure	Code of Conduct
	Appeals Procedure	Family Friendly Policy
	Bullying Policy	Recruitment Policy EDI Strategy (outward.org.uk)
Scope: This procedure will be applied irrespective of the race, gender, marital status, disability, sexuality, religious belief age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity status of the employee concerned. This policy covers all employees including flexible hour's staff.		
Policy Equality Impact Assessed		

Version number	Amendments	Reviewed by	Date
6	Policy name change, extensive wording change	Shabana Arif	23/04/2024

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print. Please contact 0208 980 7101 or email info@outward.org.uk.

1. Policy Statement

Outward is dedicated to creating a work environment and service provision free from discrimination, where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential. We believe in fostering an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and ensures fairness and dignity for all staff, volunteers, and the people we support.

This policy outlines the foundational principles, but our EDI strategy will detail specific actions, goals, and monitoring procedures.

The Outward board sets a clear organisational approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the charity's aims, strategy, culture and values. This is supported by appropriate plans, policies, milestones, targets and timelines. There is a lead EDI champion on the Outward board, currently this is Daniel Haile.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Residents and the people we support. We expect everyone to uphold the principles outlined in this document and to contribute to creating a more inclusive environment for all

2. Purpose

Our Vision

- Outward aspires to foster a culture that celebrates and reflects the rich diversity of the people we support and our employees. We are committed to:
- Ensuring equity in all aspects of our organisation and service delivery.
- Making "equity, diversity, and inclusion" (EDI) a cornerstone of all our activities.
- Actively opposing all forms of discrimination and prejudice.
- Recruiting, training, and promoting individuals based solely on their abilities.
- Guaranteeing equitable access to our services for all community members, ensuring they receive high-quality care, support, and housing.
- Employing individuals who embody our values of engagement, empowerment, and enablement
- Ensuring our EDI strategy and plans are fostered within services to achieve positive outcomes

3. Responsibilities

Employer Responsibility

Outward, as an employer, has a responsibility to:

- Uphold this EDI policy and ensure its implementation throughout the organisation.
- Foster a working environment free from discrimination and harassment.
- Provide opportunities for professional development related to EDI.
- Take appropriate action to address any concerns or complaints of discrimination.

Employee Responsibility

All employees are expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with and adhere to this EDI policy.
- Treat colleagues and the people we support with respect and dignity.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour or language.
- Participate in EDI training and initiatives.
- Contribute to creating an inclusive work environment.

4. Procedures

Protected Characteristics

Our commitment to equality extends to all individuals, regardless of their:

Protected Characteristics: These include disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

Consideration will also be given to:

- Socio-economic background
- Immigration status

Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Outward prohibits all forms of unlawful discrimination, including:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** A policy or practice that appears neutral but disproportionately disadvantages a group with a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** Detrimental treatment of someone because they have made a complaint of discrimination or supported someone else who has.
- **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Recruitment

- Outward actively seeks to build a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. We achieve this by:
- Implementing fair and objective recruitment practices that focus on skills and abilities.
- Advertising vacancies in a way that attracts a diverse pool of applicants.
- Ensuring interview panels are diverse and trained in unconscious bias awareness.
- We regularly monitor our applicants to ensure that our policy is operating effectively. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equity, diversity and inclusion.
- All applicants are required by law to provide us documents of their right to work. (Assumptions of right to work should not be made by appearance or nationality)
- We regularly carry out Equality impact assessments.

Training & Promotion

Outward provides ongoing training to all staff and volunteers on EDI principles. This training will cover:

- Understanding of protected characteristics and unlawful discrimination.
- Recognising and challenging unconscious bias.
- Delivering inclusive services and fostering an inclusive workplace.
- Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Disability

- If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager or the HR Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager or the HR Department may wish to consult with you and/or occupational health adviser and/or DWP representative about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reasonableness. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

Breaches of this policy

- We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
- If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
- All staff are protected against discrimination and this applies to residents and the people we support, If staff encounter such discrimination we will refer individuals to our EDI policy and state we have a zero tolerance toward discrimination
- There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Performance Monitoring

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect best practices and legislative changes. Outward is committed to continuous improvement in EDI and believes it is essential for our continued success and fulfilling our mission of improving lives.

Through partnerships we are committed to demonstrating leadership on EDI issues. We will:

- Screen our policies to ensure they meet EDI best practice principles.
- Work only with third party suppliers/contractors/agencies who have equal opportunities and diversity policies and we use any leverage we have to persuade them to improve their diversity in employment and practice.

5. References/Further Reading

[EDI Strategy \(outward.org.uk\)](https://outward.org.uk)

www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law

[Equality Act 2010](#)

6. General Data Protection Regulations Statement

Outward is committed to compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. It requires all staff and partners to respect confidentiality and data subjects' rights in line with its policies and procedures.

To ensure compliance with the Regulations staff must ensure that any personal information produced or processed as part of these procedures is appropriately filed on SharePoint, Sona, Iplanit, the Outward server or other agreed Password-controlled filing system(s) with role-based access control.

Whilst processing paper documents, including those from third parties, these documents must be stored in secure lockable cabinets. Records will be kept for as long as they are needed to meet the operational needs of Outward, together with legal and regulatory requirements. Where there is a deviation from this principle, the reasons for this must be recorded.

A detailed breakdown of retention and deletion of records can be found in Outward's Record Management and Retention Policy.

When disposing of documents containing personal data this should be done via confidential waste.

Please refer to Outward's Data Protection Policy and Procedure for more information.