

Brighter Futures

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy



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Brighter Futures

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Policy owner: Chief Officer

Approved by: Board of Trustees

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1. Purpose

Brighter Futures is committed to being a welcoming, respectful and inclusive community charity.

We want everyone who comes into contact with Brighter Futures to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

We recognise that treating people fairly does not always mean treating everybody in exactly the same way. Some people may need different support or reasonable adjustments so that they can participate fully.

We will seek to remove unnecessary barriers to participation and make our services, activities, volunteering and employment opportunities as accessible and inclusive as reasonably possible.

This policy sets out how Brighter Futures will promote equality, prevent unlawful discrimination and respond to concerns about discrimination, harassment, bullying or exclusion.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- trustees;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- service users;
- children and young people;
- parents and carers;
- visitors;
- members of Brighter Futures groups;
- applicants for employment or volunteering;
- contractors;
- partner organisations; and
- anyone participating in Brighter Futures activities or using our facilities.

It applies to Brighter Futures premises, activities, events, groups, projects, community services, vehicles, online communications and other activities carried out on behalf of the charity.

3. Our Commitment

Brighter Futures will seek to:

- treat people fairly, respectfully and with dignity;
- provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- recognise and respond to different needs;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled people where required;
- challenge inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour;
- make services and activities accessible wherever reasonably possible;
- recruit employees and volunteers fairly;
- create an inclusive environment for children, young people and adults;
- take concerns and complaints seriously; and
- continually look for practical ways to improve inclusion.

Brighter Futures will not tolerate bullying, intimidation, harassment, abusive behaviour or unlawful discrimination.

4. Equality Act 2010

Brighter Futures will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other equality legislation applicable to its activities.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The way particular protections apply can differ depending on whether the matter concerns employment, services or another activity.

Brighter Futures will apply the law and current statutory guidance relevant to the situation.

5. Inclusion Beyond Protected Characteristics

Our commitment to inclusion goes beyond the minimum requirements of equality legislation.

Brighter Futures exists to support a diverse community and recognises that people can experience disadvantage for many reasons.

We will therefore also seek to avoid unfair treatment or exclusion because of factors such as:

- poverty or financial circumstances;
- social or economic background;
- homelessness or housing circumstances;
- caring responsibilities;
- health or mental health;
- neurodiversity;
- literacy or communication needs;
- language;
- appearance;
- employment status;
- educational background; or
- other personal circumstances.

This does not mean that all of these are protected characteristics in law. It reflects Brighter Futures' wider values as an inclusive community charity.

6. Equality, Equity and Fairness

Brighter Futures recognises the difference between equality and equity.

Equality means ensuring people are not unlawfully discriminated against and have fair opportunities.

Equity recognises that different people may need different levels or types of support to achieve fair access and participation.

For example, it may be appropriate to:

- provide information in a different format;
- allow additional time;
- change how an activity is delivered;
- provide additional support;
- alter physical arrangements where reasonably possible; or
- make another reasonable adjustment.

Providing additional support to someone who needs it does not mean treating others unfairly.

7. Discrimination

Brighter Futures will not unlawfully discriminate against anyone.

Discrimination can take different forms.

Direct discrimination

This can occur where someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

This can occur where a rule, policy or way of doing something applies to everybody but places people sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified.

Discrimination arising from disability

A disabled person may in some circumstances experience unlawful discrimination because of something arising from their disability.

Harassment

Harassment can include unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Nobody should be treated badly because they have raised an equality concern, complained about discrimination, supported another person's complaint or otherwise exercised rights under equality law.

8. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Brighter Futures is committed to making its services and activities accessible to disabled people wherever reasonably possible.

We recognise that disabilities are not always visible.

Where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage, we will consider reasonable adjustments.

Depending on the circumstances, this might include:

- changing the way an activity is delivered;
- providing additional assistance;
- providing information in an accessible format;
- allowing additional time;
- adjusting seating or room arrangements;
- providing an alternative means of accessing a service;
- making reasonable changes to physical arrangements;
- using appropriate communication support; or
- making reasonable adjustments to recruitment or employment arrangements.

We will listen to the individual concerned and consider what adjustment would be effective and reasonable.

What is reasonable will depend on circumstances including effectiveness, practicality, safety, cost and the resources available to the charity.

A person will not be charged for a reasonable adjustment required to enable them to access a service.

9. Accessibility

When planning services and activities, Brighter Futures will consider accessibility as early as reasonably possible rather than waiting until somebody experiences a problem.

This may include considering:

- physical access;
- mobility;
- seating;
- toilets and facilities;
- hearing and visual needs;
- communication needs;
- learning disabilities;
- neurodiversity;
- mental health;
- literacy;
- digital access;
- financial barriers; and
- transport.

We recognise that we may not be able to remove every barrier immediately.

Where something cannot reasonably be changed, we will try to identify an appropriate alternative where possible.

10. Community Services and Activities

Brighter Futures will seek to make its general community services and activities open and welcoming to people who are eligible to use them.

People should not be excluded from an activity simply because they are different from other participants.

However, not every Brighter Futures activity is necessarily intended for every person.

Some services may legitimately be designed around factors such as:

- age;

- sex;
- particular needs;
- vulnerability;
- disability;
- family circumstances; or
- another identified community need.

For example, Brighter Futures operates groups intended for particular sections of the community, including Men's Shed, Women's Shed and age-specific children's and youth activities.

Such targeted provision may continue where it is consistent with Brighter Futures' charitable purposes and lawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Any restriction on access must have a legitimate reason and must not be introduced simply because of prejudice, convenience or assumptions about a particular group.

Where there is uncertainty, the Chief Officer should seek appropriate advice before introducing or changing eligibility criteria.

11. Sex-Specific Activities and Facilities

Brighter Futures recognises that equality law allows some services, activities and facilities to be provided separately or differently on the basis of sex where the legal requirements are met.

Where Brighter Futures provides a sex-specific service, activity or facility, we will:

- consider the purpose and needs the provision is intended to address;
- comply with the Equality Act 2010 and current statutory guidance;
- consider privacy, dignity and safety;
- ensure that any restriction is lawful and justified;
- avoid unnecessary exclusion; and
- seek appropriate advice where the position is unclear.

Brighter Futures also recognises that gender reassignment is a protected characteristic.

Trans people must be treated with dignity and respect and must not be subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Decisions concerning sex-specific provision will be made on the basis of current law and guidance rather than personal views about an individual.

12. Children and Young People

Children and young people participating in Brighter Futures activities will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

We will seek to ensure that activities:

- are welcoming and inclusive;

- take account of additional needs;
- challenge bullying and discriminatory behaviour;
- promote positive relationships;
- avoid stereotypes;
- provide appropriate reasonable adjustments; and
- give children and young people opportunities to participate regardless of background or circumstances.

Equality and inclusion will operate alongside Brighter Futures' Safeguarding Policy.

The safety and welfare of children and young people remains paramount.

13. Safeguarding and Equality

Equality and safeguarding are closely connected.

A person's disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other personal circumstances must never be used as a reason to dismiss or minimise a safeguarding concern.

Likewise, equality or inclusion should never be used as a reason to ignore a genuine safeguarding risk.

Concerns about abuse, exploitation, neglect or harm will be dealt with under Brighter Futures' Safeguarding Policy.

Where an equality concern also raises a safeguarding concern, safeguarding procedures will take priority where necessary to protect somebody from harm.

14. Recruitment

Brighter Futures aims to recruit employees fairly and on the basis of suitability for the role.

Job requirements will relate to the genuine needs of the position.

We will seek to:

- advertise opportunities appropriately;
- avoid unnecessary requirements that may unfairly exclude applicants;
- assess candidates consistently;
- make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes;
- avoid discriminatory interview questions;
- consider skills, experience and potential relevant to the role; and
- keep appropriate recruitment records.

Where a particular characteristic is lawfully required for a role, this will only be used where a relevant legal exception applies and there is a genuine reason for the requirement.

Applicants can request reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process.

15. Employment

Employees will be treated fairly in relation to:

- terms and conditions;
- pay;
- training;
- development;
- supervision;
- promotion;
- leave;
- performance management;
- disciplinary procedures;
- grievance procedures;
- redundancy; and
- termination of employment.

Decisions will be based on relevant and objective considerations rather than unlawful discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled employees.

Employees should raise requests for adjustments with their manager or the Chief Officer.

16. Volunteers

Brighter Futures values the contribution made by volunteers.

We will seek to provide an inclusive volunteering environment and will consider reasonable and practical adjustments to help volunteers participate.

Volunteer roles may have genuine requirements relating to matters such as:

- safeguarding;
- DBS checks;
- age;
- physical ability;
- competence;
- qualifications;
- driving requirements; or
- supervision.

These requirements should relate to the activity rather than unnecessary assumptions about individuals.

17. Trustees and Governance

Trustees should promote an organisational culture in which different experiences and perspectives are respected.

Brighter Futures will seek to avoid unnecessary barriers to trusteeship and encourage people with appropriate skills and experience from a range of backgrounds to consider becoming trustees.

Trustee appointments must nevertheless comply with the charity's governing document and legal eligibility requirements.

All trustees have responsibility for supporting the principles of this policy.

18. Harassment, Bullying and Inappropriate Behaviour

Brighter Futures will not tolerate harassment, sexual harassment, discriminatory abuse or bullying by:

- employees;
- trustees;
- volunteers;
- service users;
- visitors;
- contractors; or
- other third parties.

Examples may include:

- discriminatory insults or slurs;
- unwanted sexual comments or behaviour;
- offensive jokes;
- deliberately excluding or humiliating somebody;
- threatening behaviour;
- inappropriate messages or online communications;
- displaying offensive material;
- repeated unwanted comments about someone's protected characteristic; or
- abusing a position of power.

The context and circumstances will always be considered.

Reasonable disagreement or appropriately raising legitimate concerns is not, by itself, harassment or bullying.

19. Preventing Sexual Harassment

Brighter Futures recognises its legal responsibility as an employer to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers.

This includes considering risks from:

- colleagues;
- managers;
- volunteers;
- service users;

- visitors;
- contractors; and
- other third parties.

Brighter Futures will take proportionate preventative steps appropriate to the size and activities of the charity.

These may include:

- clear standards of behaviour;
- staff information and training;
- appropriate risk assessment;
- clear reporting routes;
- responding promptly to concerns;
- appropriate supervision;
- challenging inappropriate behaviour; and
- taking action to reduce the risk of recurrence.

Sexual harassment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal in serious cases.

20. Religion and Belief

Brighter Futures respects the right of individuals to hold religious and non-religious beliefs protected by law.

We will seek to accommodate religious practice where reasonably possible and where this does not create an unacceptable impact on safety, safeguarding, service delivery or the rights of others.

People are also entitled not to hold a religion or belief.

People with different beliefs must treat one another respectfully.

Respecting a person's beliefs does not require another person to agree with those beliefs.

21. Respectful Communication and Difference of Opinion

Brighter Futures serves a diverse community.

People who use our services may hold different social, political, religious or personal views.

We expect people to communicate respectfully.

People may disagree with one another, but disagreement must not become harassment, intimidation, discriminatory abuse or threatening behaviour.

Nobody is required to agree with another person's personal beliefs as a condition of using Brighter Futures' general services.

22. Welsh Language

Brighter Futures recognises Welsh and English as important languages within our community.

Our commitments relating specifically to the use and promotion of Welsh are set out in the Brighter Futures Welsh Language Policy.

Language needs will also be considered as part of accessibility and inclusion where appropriate.

23. Socio-Economic Inclusion

Brighter Futures recognises that poverty and financial hardship can create significant barriers to participation.

Where reasonably possible, we will seek to avoid unnecessary financial barriers to our community activities.

We will consider affordability when designing activities and services and will seek to make good use of charitable resources to support people experiencing disadvantage.

People will not be required to disclose unnecessary details about their financial circumstances simply to be treated with dignity and respect.

24. Digital and Social Media Inclusion

This policy applies to Brighter Futures' online activities as well as face-to-face services.

Discriminatory abuse, harassment or bullying through Brighter Futures' digital platforms or communications will not be accepted.

We will also seek to consider accessibility when producing important digital information and communications.

25. Photographs and Publicity

People should be represented respectfully in Brighter Futures publicity and communications.

We will avoid stereotypical, degrading or unnecessarily identifying portrayals of individuals or communities.

Appropriate consent and safeguarding arrangements must be followed when photographs or personal information are used.

Relevant requirements are also contained in Brighter Futures' Safeguarding and Data Protection policies.

26. Raising a Concern

Anyone who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, bullying or exclusion at Brighter Futures is encouraged to raise the matter.

Depending on the circumstances, concerns may be raised with:

- a member of staff;
- the activity leader;
- a manager;
- the Chief Officer; or
- a trustee where appropriate.

Employees may also use the appropriate grievance procedure.

Service users and members of the public may use the Brighter Futures Complaints & Feedback Policy.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported using the Safeguarding Policy.

People raising concerns in good faith will not be treated adversely simply because they have made a complaint or supported somebody else's complaint.

27. Responding to Concerns

Brighter Futures will take equality concerns seriously.

The response will depend on the circumstances and may include:

- listening to the person concerned;
- obtaining relevant information;
- considering immediate safety or safeguarding needs;
- making adjustments;
- informal resolution where appropriate;
- investigation;
- mediation where suitable;
- staff or volunteer management action;
- disciplinary action;
- restricting access to Brighter Futures premises or activities where justified;
- referral under safeguarding procedures; or
- obtaining external advice.

Confidentiality will be respected as far as reasonably possible, but absolute confidentiality cannot be promised where information needs to be shared to investigate a concern, protect somebody from harm or meet a legal obligation.

28. Malicious Complaints

Brighter Futures will distinguish between a complaint which is not upheld and one which is deliberately malicious or knowingly false.

A person will **not** face criticism or action simply because a complaint is investigated and not upheld.

However, deliberately making a false allegation in bad faith may itself be considered inappropriate behaviour and dealt with under the relevant procedure.

29. Training and Awareness

Brighter Futures will provide equality and inclusion information or training appropriate to people's roles and the resources of the charity.

Particular attention may be given to staff and volunteers involved in:

- recruitment;
- management;
- safeguarding;
- youth work;
- public-facing services;
- complaints;
- activity leadership; and
- decision-making about access to services.

Training will be proportionate to the organisation and the responsibilities of the individual.

30. Partners, Contractors and Organisations Using Our Facilities

Brighter Futures works with other organisations and community groups.

We expect people working on our behalf or using our facilities to behave respectfully and not engage in unlawful discriminatory or harassing behaviour.

Partner organisations remain responsible for their own equality obligations unless Brighter Futures has specifically agreed otherwise.

Where another organisation's behaviour creates a serious equality, safeguarding or safety concern, Brighter Futures may take appropriate action.

31. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring Brighter Futures operates in accordance with its charitable purposes and applicable equality law.

Trustees will approve this policy and oversee significant equality risks where appropriate.

Chief Officer

The Chief Officer is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for:

- promoting an inclusive culture;
- responding appropriately to significant concerns;
- ensuring relevant staff understand their responsibilities;
- considering reasonable adjustments;
- obtaining specialist advice where necessary; and
- referring significant matters to trustees where appropriate.

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers are expected to:

- treat people with dignity and respect;
- follow this policy;
- challenge or report inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so;
- respect reasonable adjustments;
- avoid discriminatory assumptions; and
- raise concerns where they believe somebody may be experiencing discrimination, harassment or exclusion.

Everyone Using Brighter Futures

Everyone using our premises, services and activities is expected to treat others respectfully.

We may take appropriate action where someone's behaviour seriously affects the safety, dignity or wellbeing of other people.

32. Monitoring and Improvement

Brighter Futures will take a proportionate approach to monitoring equality and inclusion.

We do not intend to collect unnecessary sensitive personal information simply for monitoring purposes.

Instead, we may consider information such as:

- accessibility requests;
- reasonable adjustments;
- complaints and feedback;
- barriers identified by service users;
- recruitment experience;
- safeguarding information where relevant;
- staff and volunteer feedback; and
- recurring problems affecting access to activities.

Where a practical improvement can reasonably be made, we will consider taking action.

33. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside relevant Brighter Futures policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Confidentiality Policy;
- Welsh Language Policy;
- Complaints & Feedback Policy;
- Volunteer Policy; and
- Employees & Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Where an incident involves more than one policy, Brighter Futures will use the procedure most appropriate to the main concern while ensuring relevant safeguarding, employment or legal responsibilities are also considered.

34. Review

This policy will normally be reviewed **annually** by the Chief Officer and Board of Trustees.

It will be reviewed sooner where appropriate following:

- significant changes to equality legislation or statutory guidance;
- changes to Brighter Futures' activities or services;
- a significant complaint or incident;
- identification of a recurring accessibility issue; or
- another material change affecting the policy.

Any significant changes will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: _____

Date approved: 21/04/2026

Next review date: 21/04/2027