

Brighter Futures

Equality and Inclusion Policy



Brighter Futures Equity Policy Statement

Brighter Futures respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of our activities and services, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality, or social / economic status.

Brighter Future is committed to ensuring that equality is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following definition of equity:

Equity is about fairness in work, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of Charity to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to all members of society, whatever their age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or socio-economic status.

Brighter Future is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy our activities and services in an environment free from threat of discrimination, intimidation, harassment, and abuse.

All Brighter Future members, staff volunteers and managers have a responsibility to challenge discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.

Brighter Future will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to our disciplinary procedures.

Equality principles

There should be no discrimination, whether direct or indirect, because of any of the protected characteristics set out in the Brighter Futures statement of principle on equal opportunities.

Discrimination may occur in the following forms:

direct discrimination — this is treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. An example of this is paying someone less because of their sex or because they belong to a different racial group. 'Because of' is very wide and includes less favourable treatment based on a perception of another person, for example that the person is gay, or is disabled, whether this perception is correct and even if the perpetrator knows that their perception is, in fact, wrong. It also includes less favourable treatment because someone is associated with another person who has a protected characteristic.

indirect discrimination — this is treating people in the same, but in such a way which adversely affects those with a protected characteristic. An example of this is telling all employees that they must work late at night — although applied to everyone, it will adversely affect those employees with childcare responsibilities, and these tend to be women.

victimisation — this is treating someone less favourably because they have asserted their right not to be discriminated against because of a protected characteristic. An example of this would be an employee claiming that they had been discriminated on the grounds of their disability and then their manager deciding when they left not to give them a reference because they had claimed disability discrimination.

harassment — this is unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone or violating their dignity. Harassment may also be of a sexual nature or may occur because someone has harassed the victim and the victim either rejects or submits to it and, because of that rejection or submission, that person treats the victim less favourably.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any Brighter Futures staff volunteer or employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of this policy and serious incidents of harassment and bullying will be treated as gross misconduct. Unwarranted or vexatious allegations that are not made in good faith will also be considered as a disciplinary matter.

Recruitment and selection

The following principles should apply whenever recruitment or selection for positions takes place, whether externally or internally:

- individuals will be assessed according to their personal capability to carry out a given job;
- assumptions that only certain types of person will be able to perform certain types of work must not be made;
- any qualifications or requirements applied to a job which have or may have the effect of inhibiting applications from certain types of person should only be retained if they can be justified in terms of the job to be done;
- any age limits applied to a job should only be retained if they can be objectively justified in terms of the job to be done— in most cases this will not be the case and managers should consult with a member of HR if considering an age limit for a post;
- the use of years of experience as a criterion for a role will need to be objectively justified;
- recruitment solely or primarily by word of mouth should be avoided as its effect is or may be to prevent certain types of person from applying;
- selection tests should be specifically related to job requirements and should measure the person's actual or inherent ability to do or train for the work;
- selection tests should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism;
- applications from different types of person should be processed in the same way and the same questions asked at interview;
- written records of interviews and reasons for appointment and non-appointment should be kept;
- questions at interview should relate to the requirements of the job;
- where any provision, criterion or practice for recruitment and selection puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage due to a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments should be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage. This could, for example, be making different interview arrangements for an applicant with mobility problems or arranging for facilities for applicants with sight or hearing impairments; and
- decisions regarding the method of recruitment or selection or who is recruited or selected should only be made by a person who has read and understood this policy.

Promotion, transfer and training

The following principles should apply to appointments for promotion, transfer and training:

- assessment criteria and appraisal schemes should be carefully examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory, whether directly or indirectly;
- assessment criteria and appraisal schemes should be monitored on a regular basis and, where such criteria or schemes result in predominantly one group of workers gaining access to promotion, transfer or training or being awarded an appraisal grade, they should be checked to make sure this is not due to any hidden or indirect discrimination;
- promotion and career development patterns will be regularly monitored to ensure that access to promotion, training and career development; opportunities is not denied to specific groups or types of workers
- traditional qualifications and requirements for promotion, transfer and training, such as length of service, years of experience or age may discriminate against certain workers and will need to be objectively justified by reference to the job requirements;
- policies and practices regarding selection for training, day release and personal development should not normally result in an imbalance in training between groups of workers; and
- where any provision, criterion or practice relating to promotion, appraisal, transfer or training puts disabled workers at a substantial disadvantage for a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments will be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage. For example, this could be making training available for a disabled worker in a different way, in a different location or at a different time.
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Grievances, disciplinary procedures, dismissals and redundancies

Brighter Future staff who, in good faith, bring a grievance (or assist another to do so) either under this policy or otherwise in relation to an equality or equal opportunities matter will not be disciplined, dismissed or otherwise suffer any adverse treatment for having done so.

No member of a group of workers will be disciplined or dismissed for performance or behaviour which would be overlooked or condoned in another group, unless there is genuine and lawful justification for different treatment.

Redundancy criteria and procedures will be carefully examined to ensure that they are not applied and do not operate in an unlawfully discriminatory manner.

The provision of any voluntary redundancy benefits will be equally available to all workers unless there is a genuine and lawful justification for doing otherwise.

Disability policy

It is Brighter Future policy that disabled people, including job applicants and employees, should be able to participate in all of the charities activities fully, on an equal basis with people who are not disabled.

Due to the wide variety of potential disabilities and the likelihood of a disability affecting different people in different ways, it would be inappropriate to prescribe rigid rules on how issues concerning disabled people should be dealt with. What is essential, however, is that all managers, supervisors and HR officers take all reasonably practical steps to ensure that disabled people are not less favourably treated or disadvantaged by comparison to people who are not disabled in relation to their work, working environment, or by any provision, criterion or practice used by Brighter Futures. Managers and supervisors need to be aware that an employee on long-term sick leave or with intermittent sickness absence may be disabled.

Brighter Future is particularly concerned that disabled workers are treated equally in the following areas:

- recruitment and selection;
- promotion, transfer and training;
- terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services; and
- dismissals, resignations and redundancies.

For this policy, disabilities are either physical or mental impairments that have a substantial and long-term effect upon a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Conditions such as HIV and some forms of cancer are covered from the point of diagnosis and do not have to already be long term.

Some disabilities are immediately obvious, for example use of a wheelchair, while other disabilities may not be apparent at all, for example HIV infection. Certain conditions are not considered to be disabilities, for example poor eyesight that is corrected simply by wearing prescription spectacles, or addiction to alcohol or other substances.

The general equality and equal opportunity principles set out earlier in this policy will apply in relation to disabled people whether they currently have a disability or have had a disability in the past.

Brighter Future will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that disabled people are able to participate in its business and activities on an equal basis with people who are not disabled.

Brighter Future will not, for a reason relating to a person's disability, treat disabled people less favourably than it treats, or would treat, others to whom the same reason does not or would not apply, unless that treatment would be justified.

If any provision, criterion or practice used by or on behalf of Brighter Futures, or any physical feature of premises occupied by Brighter Future, puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared to people who are not disabled, Brighter Future will take such reasonably practicable steps as it can to prevent this disadvantage. This is known as the duty to make reasonable adjustments.