

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



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Date Reviewed

July 2025

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Date Drafted

July 2025

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Endorsed Date

August 2025

Approval Body

The Board of Trustees

Ratified Date

Sept 2025

Published Date

October 2025

Next Review Date

Sept 2028

1 Purpose and Objectives

At The Children's Trust, we are committed to fostering a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). We believe that every child, young person, family, volunteer and staff member should feel valued, respected and treated with equity.

We are a committed equal opportunity employer, and we will not discriminate based on age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, political or religious beliefs, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibility, or any other basis prohibited by law.

We do not tolerate any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. This includes unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is a specific form of unlawful discrimination and can include:

- Unwanted sexual advances or touching
- Inappropriate comments or jokes of a sexual nature
- Sending suggestive messages or images
- Any behaviour of a sexual nature that makes somebody else feel uncomfortable, intimidated or humiliated.

This policy outlines our commitment to:

- Creating an inclusive environment for children, young people, staff and volunteers
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities and services
- Challenging discrimination, promoting fairness and treating all others with respect

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To outline the organisation's commitment and principles in relation to EDI
- To highlight the current legislation in existence regarding EDI
- To ensure that everyone at The Children's Trust is aware of their responsibilities associated with this policy
- Encourage colleagues to raise concerns.

Relevant laws and regulations include but not limited to:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Worker Protection Act (amendment of Equality Act 2010)
- UKGDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All permanent employees including bank workers and fixed term staff

- All students
- All trustees and volunteers
- All contractors, suppliers and third parties including retail customers
- All service users

3 Roles and responsibilities

All staff

- Must familiarise themselves with and act in accordance with this policy
- Should report any concerns or incidents of discrimination or harassment to their line manager, supervisor, director, People & Culture team or Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

Managers

- Are responsible for communicating this policy to their teams and will provide advice and guidance or signpost to sources of support where applicable
- Must role model inclusive behaviour and leadership, challenging prejudice and taking prompt action to deal with any breaches of policy
- Should use the Disciplinary policy and Resolution policy

The People & Culture Team

- Will ensure fair processes and consistent implementation of this policy
- Provide guidance and training to staff and managers
- Will deal with any grievance that is raised promptly and sensitively
- Will review and keep this policy up to date

4 Definitions

Unless otherwise stated, the words or expressions contained in this document shall have the following meaning:

Term	Definition
The Charity/ organisation/ TCT	Refers to The Children's Trust
Board	The Children's Trust Board of Trustees
Equity	Equity can be defined as ensuring systems, practices and processes are in place to give individuals what they need to be successful. Although both equality and equity promote fairness, equality achieves this through treating everyone the same regardless of need, while equity acknowledges the need to adapt systems and processes for different individuals in order for opportunities to be accessed equally.
Diversity	Diversity in this context refers to a workplace comprised of individuals of varying attributes, backgrounds and perspectives.
Inclusion	Inclusion in this context refers to an inclusive work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and are welcome for who they are and what they uniquely bring to the organisation.
Age	This refers to a person belonging to a particular age or range of ages (e.g. under 18)

Disability	A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day duties.
Discrimination	This means treating someone less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic. For example, an employer does not interview a job applicant because of the applicant's ethnic background.
Gender Identity	Gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself, and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth. This may include the identity non-binary. (In April 2025, The Supreme Court ruled that - Gender Identity is not recognised as defining legal sex under The Equality Act 2010. We await guidance following the current consultation process)
Marriage or civil partnership	A person who is either married or has entered into a civil partnership.
Neurodiversity	The range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population. It usually includes people who have dyslexia, dyspraxia/developmental coordination disorder (DCD), dyscalculia, Autism and ADHD.
Pregnancy and maternity/ paternity	Pregnancy is the condition of expecting a baby. Maternity/paternity refers to the period following birth and is linked to maternity/paternity leave in the context of employment.
Race or ethnicity	Referencing the race, colour, language, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins of an individual.
Religion or belief	This includes religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief (i.e. atheism).
Sex	Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Usually male or female.
Sexuality	The sexual orientation of an individual.

Policy Statement

5.1 The Equality Act

The objective of the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 was to strengthen protection, advance equality and simplify the law. In accordance with this Act, no individual will be discriminated against or victimised. The Act includes the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity

6. Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

The Children's Trust operates in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 act. In the organisation this list extends to include spent criminal convictions provided there are no safeguarding implications, which would take precedence. This will be reviewed to adapt to legal changes (e.g. recent Supreme Court rulings).

5.2 A commitment to equity

The Children's Trust is committed to embedding equity through justice, impartiality and fairness in our procedures and processes.

The organisation seeks to identify where practices and procedures are not equitable and take action to address this.

Section 158 of the Equality Act 2010 permits employers to take positive action in respect of people who have protected characteristics and experienced disadvantage, have different needs or have disproportionately low participation. The Act permits this positive action to take place in the form of proportionate measures to overcome a perceived disadvantage, meeting specific needs based on a protected characteristic, or by encouraging participation.

Section 13(3) of the Equality Act 2010 allows employers take positive action by lawfully limiting recruitment, training and promotion opportunities to disabled people, without this amounting to unlawful direct discrimination against a non-disabled person.

The Children's Trust therefore may implement such strategies when inequitable processes, practices or procedures are identified to provide more equitable opportunities throughout the organisation. An example of this applies to recruitment. We strive to ensure our job adverts reflect the organisation's promises and goals, including our commitment to equity and inclusivity at all levels. This has meant we have started to remove the requirement to have a degree for many of our roles when this is not explicitly needed, such as in healthcare roles. We are continuously reviewing our practises in this area to help encourage a diverse group of candidates is to apply.

5.3 A commitment to valuing and promoting diversity

Diversity involves recognising and valuing differences in its broadest sense. It includes creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and embrace differences.

The Children's Trust believes that excellence is achieved through recognising the value of every individual and the varied perspectives they can offer. It aims to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff, volunteers, children and their families and enables them to achieve their full potential. This allows every individual to contribute fully, and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their time at The Children's Trust.

This means where possible we will ensure that the accessibility needs of all staff are met, which may involve a referral to occupational health or guidance from an employee's GP. We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments, which may include flexible working, providing equipment or referral to the access to work scheme (adjustments are varied depending on role). We realise the

needs of a person change, and every effort will be made to support them in their transition, and in performing their role to the best of their ability.

5.4 A commitment to providing an inclusive environment

The Children's Trust aims to establish an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and are welcomed for who they are and what they uniquely bring to the organisation. Therefore, The Children's Trust will not tolerate discrimination, particularly where the behaviour is intentional. We understand the emotional weight of raising issues of this nature, and concerns will be taken seriously, and handled confidentially and sympathetically. We encourage staff members who have experienced or observed discrimination to raise this with their line manager in the first instance if they feel comfortable to do so, and if not then with the HR Business Partnering team. Alternatively, this can also be discussed with the Director of Resources and Head of People & Culture.

To this end, The Children's Trust acknowledges the following basic rights for all those within the scope of this policy:

- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- For each individual to feel comfortable and confident in sharing their unique contributions, ideas and input to support the work of the organisation

These rights carry with them responsibilities and The Children's Trust requires those within the scope of the policy to recognise these rights and to act in accordance with them in all dealings with fellow members of The Children's Trust. In addition, The Children's Trust will comply with all relevant legislation and good practice to meet these aims.

5 Stakeholder Consultation

Appendix 1 details the stakeholders who were consulted in the development of this policy.

6 Related Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures stated below support the effective application of this policy:

- Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment at Work Policy and SOP
- Disciplinary Policy
- Investigation Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy and SOP
- Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Zero Tolerance – confirm policy name and timing

7 External References and Guidance

The following external resources and guidance were consulted in drafting this policy:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- Worker Protection Act (amendment of Equality Act 2010)
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Resource pages on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion provided by Acas
- Resource pages on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion provided by Brightmine

8 Document Change Control

Version	Status	Description (of changes)	Reviewed by	Reviewed/ Issued Date
0.1	Draft	Review and update policy since interim update in October 2024	Laura Redmond	July 2025
0.2	Draft			
0.3	Draft			
0.4	Draft			
1.0	Final	Approved	Board	Oct 2025

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Checklist

Review and complete the following checklist to indicate which stakeholders were consulted in the development of this policy.

#	Question	Yes/ No	Stakeholder(s) to be consulted
1	Is there a statutory requirement to have in place this particular policy/ does the policy need to comply with detailed legislation?	Yes	HR Business Partnering Team
2	Is implementation of the policy (or any element of it) dependent on the use of new or existing information technology?	No	
3	Does implementation of the policy (or any element of it) place any demands on/ or affect the activities of the Estates and Facilities teams (e.g. does it impact the provision or maintenance of premises, equipment, vehicles or other TCT assets)?	No	
4	Does implementation of the policy or any element of it involve/ impact the processing of personal data?	No	
5	Does implementation of the policy require significant unbudgeted operational or capital expenditure?	No	
6	Does implementation of the policy (or any element of it) directly or indirectly impact on the delivery of services / activities in other areas of the organisation? E.g. a policy written by a clinical lead in CF&S might impact on the delivery of care for CYP attending the School.	No	
7	Is there a need to consider Health and Safety or potential environmental impacts in developing and implementing the policy?	No	
8	Have you consulted with a representative of those who will be directly impacted by the policy?	Yes	Spark Representatives
9	Please detail any other stakeholder groups consulted, if applicable.	N/A	