

## **Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity**

This policy document provides Young Epilepsy with the overall framework to meet its commitment to promoting inclusivity, equality and diversity. The organisation recognises the need to tackle discrimination and to promote equality across all groups whilst recognising the diverse needs of individuals.

### **Policy Statement**

Young Epilepsy's approach to Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity relates to the children and young adults we support, as well as our staff, volunteers, partnerships and the wider community involved in the delivery of our work.

We believe the differences individuals bring with their own culture and range of life experiences, brings creativity, vitality and innovation to the charity.

This document outlines our commitment and responsibilities to provide an inclusive culture which treats all individuals with dignity and respect. This is founded on placing a high value on diversity and recognising the differences people bring.

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### **Our Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity Mission Statement**

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**Young Epilepsy aims to ensure that no child or young adult we support, job applicant, employee, volunteer or other partner, contractor receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union membership or economic status, political activities, social class, or where the person lives.**

## **Benefits of Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity (I, E & D)**

At Young Epilepsy we support children and young adults from a range of different backgrounds. Each youngster is recognised as a unique individual, and their individual care plan will be designed to ensure their views, family beliefs and cultures are taken into consideration and respected at all times. Whilst children and young adults are supported by Young Epilepsy, regardless of which part of our service support they are accessing, we believe our focus on I, E & D will increase their confidence, and provide them with a wide variety of opportunities to meet and mix with other youngsters.

At the same time, the benefits of a diverse workforce are well recognised and include a culture where difference is visibly welcomed and where people are actively included in order that we benefit from their unique talents in the provision of a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of the young people we support. Having a diverse workforce, means by working together we are able to challenge each other to constantly improve service delivery. Staff are appreciated when they are valued for their individuality and their unique offering to the team(s) on which they work. This improves job satisfaction, as well as recruitment and retention rates.

The principles of I, E & D are extended to everyone involved in our work, including the families & friends of the young people we support, volunteers, other partners and the local community. This ensures everyone's views are valued, and this enables us to develop best practice, to be open and transparent and to ensure all our policies and procedures adhere to this philosophy.

We understand how the differences in culture and range of life experiences brings with it creativity, vitality and innovation to the charity.

## **The Purpose of our Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity Approach**

At Young Epilepsy our approach to I, E & D is to:

- Explain the legislative framework within which Young Epilepsy policies and procedures must operate.
- Ensure all of the children and young adults we support, our staff, volunteers and other partners associated with our work are treated with equality and fairly when decisions are made that affect:
  - The quality or service they receive from us, or
  - Their recruitment, retention, training, development and working practices.
- Ensure we value every young person we support, and every employee's and volunteer's contribution irrespective of their ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, marital or family status, age or disability.

## Legal Framework

The main legislation applicable to this policy is the 'Equality Act 2010'. This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations

There are nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act which are as follows:

- Age. Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 to 30 year olds)
- Disability
- Gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

Discrimination which happens because of one or more of these characteristics is unlawful under the Act. Everyone has some of these characteristics - for example, gender or age - so the Act has there to protect everyone from discrimination.

It is important to understand these definitions to avoid unintentionally discriminating against someone.

The Equality Act not only impacts on policies but also 'practices', i.e. things you do which are not covered by a written policy, perhaps at a local or group level. These could include areas like recruitment decisions, rotas, training, meetings, social occasions and cultural factors like teasing, banter and/or use of language.

Other legislation to be aware of, alongside the Equality Act are:

- Children's and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Prevent Strategy
- Keeping Young People Safe
- Autism Act 2009
- Human Rights Act 1998.

Whilst the Charity's approach is not driven solely by legislation, it recognises the importance of ensuring that Young Epilepsy meets its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice which accompany the legislation.

The Charity's approach to I. E & D forms part of our internal quality assurance processes to ensure that a high-quality standard of service is maintained and to

meet the requirements of government policies and initiatives. This policy should be read in conjunction with other Young Epilepsy policies and procedures.

### **Approach, scope and responsibility for the implementation of this policy**

The Trustees, Chief Executive and Executive Directors have a responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy in relation to the young people we support, our staff, volunteers and other partners associated with our work.

It is important to note that, as an employer, Young Epilepsy is potentially legally responsible for acts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation carried out by its employees in the course of their employment.

Young Epilepsy also has a legal responsibility for the acts of agents carried out with the authority of the charity. An agent is someone we have instructed to do something on our behalf, but who is not employed by us.

This applies in situations where:

- An employee was acting in the course of their employment, or
- The agent was carrying out our instructions.

It does not matter whether, or not, Young Epilepsy knew about or approved of what the employee or agent did.

Employees must ensure that their behaviour at work creates an environment which is free from any form of harassment, victimisation and all other forms of discrimination. Employees should be aware that if they are involved in discriminatory actions or practice they may not only face disciplinary action but also legal proceedings against themselves as individuals.

The overall objective of Young Epilepsy's approach to I, E & D Equality, is to achieve the following in employment policies and practices, in services, and in engagement with partners and the communities within which we operate:

- Develop an organisational culture which embraces an inclusive approach
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds
- Foster a culture of respect and understanding between people of diverse cultures, backgrounds, circumstances and identities

The charity recognises that:

- discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time
- people have a range of diverse needs and our services must be designed or delivered in different ways to respond to these needs

The scope this approach applies to all the children and young people we support, the staff working within the organisation including employees, contractors, volunteers and staff from other organisations working on charities premises. It also applies to parents and visitors.

This policy and its guidance applies to all our premises and all staff working in other premises, including any place where the occasion can be identified with either the requirements of Young Epilepsy or with social events linked to the organisation.

## **Intentions & Aims**

Young Epilepsy intends to:

- Incorporate consideration of I, E & D principles from the onset in all its policies, plans, strategies and procurement etc. throughout service delivery.
- Undertake equality impact assessments to measure the impact of policies and services and to determine the needs of the children and young people we support, our employees, volunteers and the public
- Identify the I, E & D outcomes for these groups as necessary
- Reflect the diversity of the geographical areas it serves in publications, events and other marketing and communications activities
- Follow the social model of disability
- Apply the principles of this policy to suppliers of goods and services to the charity.

The aims relating to our service delivery to children and young adults are to:

- Provide appropriate, accessible and effective support services and facilities without discrimination or prejudice
- Provide clear information about our services in appropriate formats or languages which meet people's needs
- Monitor our services to ensure those receiving support all receive fair access and outcomes and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent
- Consult as far as is reasonably possible, with children and young adults and their families when making decisions about the support they receive
- Respond promptly and fairly to any complaints received including those relating to discrimination

The aims in relation to employment are to:

- Ensure that our employment policies and procedures do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual on unjustifiable grounds
- Work to achieve a workforce that represents the children and young adults we support

- Monitor recruitment and selection processes, training and development opportunities, disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment and capability procedures by the nine protected characteristics and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent
- Promote a culture of fairness and respect in its employment policies, procedures and practices
- Provide appropriate training for employees at every level on equality, diversity and human rights issues
- Protect employees from bullying, harassment and violence and investigate all claims of bullying and harassment that are made
- Respond to the particular needs of employees including those relating to ethnic group, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief.

### **Data Collection**

As part of our I, E & D activity, Young Epilepsy collect and collate relevant data on all the children/young adults we support and staff to inform the I, E & D agenda. Analysis of these data sets enables us to undertake gap analyses to identify issues that require particular redress.

Data collection and analysis will be agreed in line with relevant policies, procedures and relevant GDPR obligations and will be reported in line with governance requirements.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

It is a requirement to complete and publish equality impact assessments. As an organisation providing services to the public sector, Young Epilepsy have obligations to promote equality and treat people with dignity and respect in terms of provision of services and how we operate as an employer.

The purpose of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to help demonstrate that different needs are taken into account in planning and delivery of services and implementation of policies and procedures.

EIA is a method of ensuring that services are inclusive and of equal benefit to different groups.

An equality impact assessment is required when:

- developing a new piece of work
- amending or reviewing an existing piece of work
- commissioning a new service
- reviewing delivery of an existing service

The process of EIA is defined in the EIA Guidelines which outline the way in which the assessment should be undertaken. An EIA template is available on the intranet.

### **Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity Committee**

Young Epilepsy has its own Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity Committee which meet once each term to consider and assure the work we do in this area.

The Committee are responsible for the completion of an annual report to the Trustees and Executive team, as well as for bringing any areas of concern to their attention as soon as these are highlighted.

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**This guidance document is agreed by the Executive Management Team and will be implemented by all departments.**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Chief Executive**

Date of next review: 1 July 2021