

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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Policy owner(s): Head of People and Culture	Review frequency: Every 3 years Next review date: April 2024
Related Documents (to be found on staff intranet): Recruitment and Selection Policy, Bullying and Harassment, Grievance Procedure, E,D&I 5 year plan	

INTRODUCTION

Definitions:

Equality

Equality includes fairness, ensuring individuals or groups are not treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics. It also includes equality of opportunity to ensure those who may be disadvantaged can have the tools they need to access the same opportunities as their peers.

Diversity

Recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. Having a workforce with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, allowing cultural creativity and innovation.

Inclusion

At NCB inclusion focuses on an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. This is created when we become more aware of our unconscious biases and have learned how to manage them.

Direct discrimination: Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perceptive discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see associative discrimination below).

Indirect discrimination: Indirect discrimination can occur when a condition, rule, policy or even a practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. For example, it could be indirect discrimination if an event is set up at a venue which only has access via stairs, because people with a disability involving mobility issues such as wheelchair users would not be able to attend.

Harassment: Harassment is defined as "unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Bullying: the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online

NCB is committed to providing a working environment that is free from all forms of harassment and bullying. This commitment is reflected in NCB's Harassment and Bullying Policy. We encourage the reporting of any form of discrimination. Individuals will not be detrimentally impacted for reporting discrimination of any kind.

NCB strives to be a leading organisation for the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion (E,D&I) and for challenging inequality across all sections of the communities within which we work. We are committed to taking positive action to identify and eliminate inequality and promote inclusiveness for everyone we interact with. The achievement of equality and diversity is the collective responsibility of every member of staff, creating a positive, inclusive ethos with a shared commitment to respecting diversity and difference.

NCB is fully committed to the active promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in all of its employment practices, in the work that it undertakes, and in the provision of all its services. NCB treats all employees, associates, clients and beneficiaries, and the children and young people with whom we engage fairly. This is irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics as laid out in the Equality Act 2010 and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland). We recognise that discrimination may occur for other characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, which are not explicitly protected by the Equality Act 2010. We will challenge inequality in all its forms.

We are committed to having a workforce which is truly representative of all sections of society and our beneficiaries, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

Application of this policy is the responsibility of all of NCB's senior leadership and management teams, trustees, associates and every member of staff. We will expect all our stakeholders to uphold and respect our approach to E, D&I.

POLICY

While we recognise our legal obligation, under the Equalities Act 2010, to rule out discrimination, we wish to fully embed E,D&I in our work and culture. We understand NCB will benefit now and in the long term when we embrace and value the diversity of thoughts, ideas and ways of working people from different backgrounds, experiences and identities bring. This will help us to grow and reach our potential, empower and engage our stakeholders, improve our decision making and leadership and better meet the needs of our diverse beneficiaries.

This policy extends to all areas of NCB including:

1. Attraction, recruitment, selection and retention of new staff
2. Employment and management of staff
3. Service provision and funding

NCB subsequently aspires to inform the debate on issues affecting children and young people from diverse backgrounds from an evidence-based perspective.

We will collect and analyse data that measures our improvement in this area. This will help us to develop and improve our practice.

Recruitment

NCB will take steps to ensure that individuals continue to be selected solely on their ability to do the job. We will ensure that no part of the recruitment process is a barrier to candidates and will communicate our approach to diversity, offer reasonable adjustments and additional support if required.

Job descriptions and person specifications will reflect role requirements; any advertising of vacancies will be compatible with this policy and questions on any application forms will be relevant and non-discriminatory.

Anyone involved in recruitment or selection must take an unbiased approach regardless of the applicant's individual characteristics. Interview questions will be asked in relation to the job, avoiding those which are discriminatory, or

which might be perceived as such. The People & Culture team will help with guidance and/or training for this.

We will ensure that the recruitment process is not a barrier to candidate selection and will offer reasonable adjustments and additional support to attend interviews and carry out selection tests where needed. We recognise that some disabilities are hidden and we seek to support all disabilities as well as recognising that mental health is as important as physical health.

We will actively seek to diversify our staff and trustees through recruitment and selection processes and procedures such as using positive action when faced with two equal candidates. More details on this can be found in the recruitment and selection policy.

Further information about the recruitment process can be found in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Employment and Management of staff

NCB respects the dignity of all employees and values the contribution they make in the workplace. We will not discriminate in the allocation of duties between staff employed in any grade, or grades with comparable job descriptions. All employees will be considered solely on their merits for career development and promotion.

Where possible, we will remove barriers to career development, training, special work projects and benefits. Where we are made aware of the needs of an individual with a protected characteristic, we will act to support them and to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers where necessary.

We will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law. All forms of unlawful discrimination will be avoided. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

We will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any kind and will continue to nurture a culture that values, respects and cares for its people, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

Managers and all other employees will receive guidance and/or training about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy as well as being encouraged to be proactive towards equality, diversity and inclusion for example being actively anti-racist. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, stakeholders, beneficiaries and the public.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Service provision and Funding

All directorates in NCB will aim to ensure that actions to meet the needs of the target equality groups and socially excluded groups, and actions to promote equality and challenge discrimination are included in the annual plans.

NCB aims to ensure that equality and diversity issues are central to all employee's work, including the development of projects, policies, strategies or working with agencies. We seek to ensure that in planning, delivering and monitoring strategies and policies, ED&I issues are considered at the outset of work and that we will consult with staff and those affected by the work.

Goods, services and facilities

NCB will ensure that the purchase of goods, services and facilities is undertaken in line with our equality and diversity commitments. Wherever possible, we will aim to ensure that we use agencies or companies who share our values on

E,D&I. We will establish procedures to ensure that businesses from diverse communities have an equal opportunity of competing for NCB contracts.

We pay all of our staff in London, including sub-contracted staff the London Living Wage and elsewhere we commit to paying the Real Living Wage to ensure that anyone working for NCB is being paid fairly.

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of all Directors to ensure that NCB's ED&I aims are kept under review and are operated throughout NCB.

The People and Culture team will monitor the implementation of this policy and will regularly monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion. Particular attention will also be given to applications for employment, promotion, and training and development opportunities. In addition to monitoring if certain groups are concentrated in salary grades, jobs or departments.

A 5-year plan is available on the intranet with 1-year action plans which will be updated annually. Quarterly reporting on specific diversity statistics is done in line with the operational planning process which is sent to the board of trustees. Relevant regular reports will be made available to SLT and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group. Staff will be given the opportunity to comment on practice via the staff survey and through the E,D&I group reps as well as through their line management and directly to the People and Culture team.

All people related policies are checked by union reps and signed off by SLT. Depending on the nature of the policy, it may also be checked by the E,D&I group, or other relevant staff or groups in the organisation. This helps to highlight where there may be any inconsistencies in fairness towards all employees.

Reporting breaches of this policy

Any employee who believes they have been the victim of a breach of this policy or who has witnessed a breach of this policy affecting another employee,

should report the matter immediately either to their line manager or to the Head of People & Culture. Alternatively, an employee who wishes to make a complaint may use the organisation's formal grievance procedure. Breaches of this policy could lead to disciplinary procedures.