

Policy name	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
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Associated policies	Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy Disciplinary and Grievance Policy Privacy and Data Protection Policies Recruitment and Selection Policy Safeguarding Policy Transitioning at Work Policy
Privacy	External

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1. Introduction

Equality, diversity and inclusion are not just seen as something to aim for but as something to be valued and an asset in delivering different services to different people. NSUN recognises that certain groups and individuals are discriminated against in society and is fully committed to valuing diversity and ensuring that equal opportunity and inclusion becomes an integral feature of all its activities.

Diversity – we understand, recognise and value difference - our different backgrounds, experiences, ethnicities, beliefs and abilities.

Equality – the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities, while respecting difference.

Inclusion – ensuring everyone is accepted, welcomed, included and feels respected and valued for who they are.

NSUN recognises that when people feel valued, they function at full capacity and feel part of our mission.

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) consolidates and replaces most of the previous discrimination legislation for England, Scotland and Wales. It sets out the personal characteristics that are protected by the law and the behaviour that is unlawful. The Act covers discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These categories are known in the Act as '**protected characteristics**'. You are also protected, by the Act, from discrimination if you're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a family member or friend and/or you've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

NSUN also recognises that there are other non-protected characteristics including but not limited to: homelessness, refugees/asylum seekers, carers, which this policy also covers.

This policy refers to the Equality Act 2010 Code of practice, Employment: Statutory Code of practice which can be found by clicking on [this link](#).

2. Statement

NSUN is committed to diversity, inclusion and providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. Our aim is that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect (please see our separate Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy for further information). NSUN will not accept a contract which is identified as unreasonably discriminatory, and will work positively within the given parameters to provide equal access to all. Unequal treatment, prejudice or harassment of an employee or member is unacceptable and unwanted in our organisation. This policy is intended to assist putting this commitment into practice.

3. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that:

- NSUN trustees and staff understand that it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a 'protected characteristic'.
- NSUN trustees and staff understand that it is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of NSUN or the wider public or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers caused by disability.

This policy applies to the following:

- NSUN Members, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers

- Staff recruitment, employment and development.

4. Types of unlawful discrimination

NSUN accepts the definition of “direct” and “indirect” discrimination as stated in the legislation and extends the scope of these definitions to include AIDS/HIV status and history of mental ill health or distress and substance misuse problems.

Direct Discrimination occurs where:

- A person treats another **less favourably** than they treat or would treat others because of a protected characteristic.
- People are deliberately **segregated or harassed** on the basis of their protected characteristic.
- A person is **victimised** for making a complaint of discrimination, representing a complainant or acting as a witness in a complaint of discrimination.
- An employer treats a worker less favourably because of the worker’s association with another person who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination occurs where:

In the application of terms, conditions or requirements a proportion of one group finds it harder to comply with the terms, conditions or requirements than an alternative group and there is no justifiable reason for such terms, conditions or requirements. The requirements in the person specification of a job will always be subject to the application of this definition.

5. Anti-racist approach

NSUN has a zero-tolerance approach to racism with an aim to be an anti-racist organisation. As per the Equality Act, race can include colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. NSUN recognises that any one term will not resonate with everyone when talking about race and ethnicity. The Race Disparity Audit’s (which you can read by clicking on [this link](#)) recommendation is to use the term ‘ethnic minorities.’ Another term which is gaining popularity in the UK is ‘People of Colour (PoC)’, or people from racialised communities/racialised people. This is instead of using the terms BME/BAME which a lot of government departments, public bodies and the media still use.

NSUN recognises that racial discrimination operates at an individual, institutional and societal level. Whether overt or through unconscious bias, racism can occur at work and at NSUN events and projects. NSUN is committed to identifying and stopping this. NSUN is committed to ensuring we have a culture of trust, with safe spaces and systems, where our members, trustees, staff or volunteers experiencing racism feel confident to come forward and know that they will be listened to. It is important to us that we take time to talk, share experiences and learn from each other. Please speak to an NSUN manager if you experience or witness any form of racism. NSUN treats allegations of racism seriously and will always take action.

Examples of how NSUN champions diversity in our work includes setting clear and ambitious targets to fund groups led by and for people from racialised communities in our grant-making work.

6. Access

INSUN follows the social model of disability and as such recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things. NSUN recognises that barriers make life harder for disabled people. NSUN will endeavour to, where possible, remove these barriers thereby creating equality.

For face-to-face events we will:

- Book locations which are wheelchair accessible and where possible will make floor plans

- and/or images of the location available in advance
- Provide BSL interpreting, where possible
- If someone who is visually impaired is chairing a meeting, ensure a sighted person is available to look out for people with hands up wanting to ask questions, where possible
- Have a quiet space where attendees can take breaks from the main event, where possible.

For online events we will:

- Provide BSL interpreting where possible and closed captioning/transcription as a minimum.

NSUN may on occasion provide small grants to user-led or community groups, such as peer support groups, which may be unincorporated organisations and as such do not have their own formal policies on disability access. As part of the application process, NSUN will ask these groups how they ensure accessibility to disabled members.

7. Members, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, visitors and others connected to NSUN

NSUN will not discriminate unlawfully against members using or seeking to use the services we provide. If you are bullied or harassed by a member, volunteer, supplier, contractor, visitor or someone else contacted with NSUN, or if you witness someone else being bullied or harassed, please report this to an NSUN manager who will take appropriate action.

8. Responsibility for Implementation

NSUN trustees, having formally adopted the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, accept responsibility for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the policy. The day-to-day responsibility for implementation lies with the Interim CEO. All staff and members have a responsibility to ensure the positive application of this policy.

9. Implementation

Recruitment

There are clear person specifications and job descriptions for all jobs and candidates will be short-listed according to these criteria. The interviews will be conducted in accordance with NSUN's policies.

NSUN will take positive action in recruitment advertising by utilising the relevant sections of the Act, when this is relevant. NSUN shares jobs adverts in online networks led by people from marginalised and/or racialised communities.

NSUN will ask at the application stage for paid and/or trustee positions whether applicants require any adjustments to the interview process to enable them to participate and do our best to meet any adjustments requested.

All NSUN appointments and promotions will be based on merit and no job applicant or employee will be unfairly discriminated against on grounds of a 'protected characteristic'.

Any disclosure of health problems, including mental health or substance misuse problems will only be discussed following a job offer.

NSUN will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and to employment arrangements so that a disabled person is not at any substantial disadvantage.

Employment

Any employee, who has a complaint of discrimination, will be encouraged to raise the matter under NSUN's Grievance Procedure (please see the separate Disciplinary and Grievance Policy for further details). The complaint will be fully and objectively investigated and all possible action taken to eradicate the problem.

Development

NSUN will ensure that all staff are made aware of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy during their induction period.

Staff will be made aware that differences of culture and lifestyle are to be valued and enhanced not just accepted and tolerated. An appreciation of diversity enables NSUN to provide better services to people with diverse needs.

All staff will have a personal training needs analysis as part of their ongoing supervision and appraisal. This will enable them to have equal access to training and development opportunities according to the requirements of their post. NSUN also recognises that individuals learn in a variety of ways and opportunities for learning will be provided to reflect this.

Members

Facts including but not limited to age, gender, and ethnicity may be requested, but never mandated, for member sign up and to take part in projects where relevant and possible and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018 (please see the separate Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy for further information).

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

NSUN will:

- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the policy.
- Assess how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is working in practice, reviewing it annually and taking action to address any issues raised by it or resulting from it.
- Ensuring equal opportunities have been implemented is a key element of any project reporting or evaluation completed by NSUN.