



Equality and Diversity Policy

Manchester Deaf Centre

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1. Policy statement

Manchester Deaf Centre's commitment to the principles of equality and diversity in employment and service delivery is central to its ethos, principles, and practice. One of the organisation's core beliefs is that every individual and community has unique talents, knowledge and insights that are important.

In making progress on these issues, it is necessary to recognise people as individuals with a diverse range of identities, experiences and needs. However, it is also vital to recognise that certain groups in our society face particular disadvantage and discrimination.

All employees, volunteers, service users and other stakeholders are covered by this policy, and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas will be monitored, and policies and practices amended if necessary to ensure that there is no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct, or indirect, overt, or latent.

Manchester Deaf Centre is committed to being an organisation which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the 'protected characteristics' described in the Equality Act 2010).

Social class (socio-economic background) can be defined by:

1. economic factors (wealth, income, occupation)
2. political factors (power, status)
3. cultural factors (lifestyle, education, values, beliefs)

There is a strong link between social class and groups with other protected characteristics, as they are often denied access to power, wealth, status, resources and opportunities.

Social class is not a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010, however because of its close links to other inequalities and the way socio-economic status is built into the structures of our market-based society, Manchester Deaf Centre includes it in our policy and action plan.

Any statement of policy in equality and diversity must recognise that social categorisations such as race, class and gender, as they apply to a given individual or group, create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression. This is referred to as intersectionality.

Manchester Deaf Centre believes that all its workers, service users and stakeholders are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

This policy aims to prevent and remove unfair and discriminatory practices within the organisation and to encourage full contribution from the diverse communities represented across the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers and key stakeholders.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance, and particularly any relevant Codes of Practice.

The policy is designed to:

- ensure that no applicant, member of staff, volunteer, service user or stakeholder receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristics, or their social class or socio-economic background.
- ensure that applicants, employees and volunteers are not disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance and that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment and redundancy are determined based on capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.
- ensure that Manchester Deaf Centre's activities and services do not discriminate against service users and stakeholders in how they can access the services and activities delivered by the organisation and ensure that the services are accessible, provided in an equitable manner and are responsive to the needs of diverse groups of people.
- ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The organisation is committed to opposing actively all forms of discrimination and oppression.

2. Equalities commitments

Manchester Deaf Centre is committed to promoting equality to the Deaf Community through a variety of services. In the course of this work.

Manchester Deaf Centre will highlight equality factors and promote values of equality and diversity.

As an organisation which employs people, engages volunteers and has a wide range of service users and stakeholders, we make the following commitments:

We will:

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Challenge all forms of discrimination and oppression that have an impact on the people we represent
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about people with any of the protected characteristics or from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds
- Promote positive images of people and groups that traditionally face discrimination and oppression

Age - We will:

- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged because of their age

Disability - We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services, employment, and volunteering opportunities
- seek to maintain equality of access to information and provide appropriate support. This could include for example loop systems; alternative formatting; and sign language interpretation.

Marriage or civil partnership - We will:

- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged because of their relationship status. Manchester Deaf Centre recognises all our employees right to a healthy work life balance.

Pregnancy or maternity - We will:

- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy, maternity, or adoption needs.

Gender Identity - We will:

- Treat Trans people and people who are non-binary and nongender supportively and according to their individual needs.
- Respond to transphobic incidents swiftly and sensitively.
- Use inclusive language (people rather than men and women for example).
- Campaign for a broader view of gender identity that is not limited to the current narrow view of gender reassignment in the 2010 Equality Act.

Race -We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs, including institutional racism.
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents.
- actively promote race equality within Manchester Deaf Centre and through our work.
- take positive action to redress the negative impact of institutional racism.

Religion or belief - We will:

- ensure that people's religion or beliefs and related.
- observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible.
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Sex - We will:

- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men.
- offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.
- ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Sexual orientation - We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of people who identify as

lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, asexual, transgender, queer and people who are questioning their sexuality.

- Avoid making assumptions about a person's sexuality. Use gender neutral terms such as partner etc.
- Ensure lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and people who are questioning their sexuality are explicitly included in all our policies.
- Challenge homophobia wherever it occurs and respond swiftly and sensitively to homophobic incidents.

Ex-offenders – We will:

- Prevent discrimination against our employees or volunteers regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

Socioeconomic Background -We will:

- actively promote the inclusion of people and communities from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (or working class backgrounds) throughout all Manchester Deaf Centre work.
- ensure that people from differing socio-economic backgrounds are given equal access to our employment, volunteering, training, development, and promotion opportunities.
- take positive action to redress the negative impact of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Language needs:

- Although the use of BSL as first language is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, BSL is now legally recognized as a language of the UK under the BSL Act 2022. MDC prides itself of being inclusive of those who use BSL as first language as well as those who don't.

We will ensure that this is communicated to:

- all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders
- all private contractors, reminding them of their responsibilities towards equality of opportunity
- any agencies responsible for our recruitment

- the wider public via our website

3. Discrimination

Definition of discrimination

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the nine protected characteristics). Discrimination may be direct or indirect.

Types of discrimination:

Direct discrimination

This occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats someone less favourably than another on the grounds of one or more of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination

This is the application of a policy, criterion, or practice to a person which the employer would apply to others, but which is such that:

- it is detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person represent.
- the employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on an objective basis.
- and the person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.

Associative discrimination

This is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination

This is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he or she has a particular protected characteristic when he or she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

4. Unlawful reasons for discrimination

Under the 2010 Equality Act it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of any of the nine protected characteristics.

Age

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. The exception to this is the calculation of redundancy payments which is prescribed by law.

Disability

It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a nondisabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to the service and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person. The same principle applies to volunteering opportunities within the organization.

Manchester Deaf Centre has a duty to make **reasonable adjustments** to facilitate the employment or voluntary work of a disabled person. These may include:

- making adjustments to premises.
- re-allocating some of a disabled employee or volunteer's duties.
- transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability.
- giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation.
- providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee or volunteer.
- supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees and volunteers.
- any other adjustments that Manchester Deaf Centre considers reasonable and necessary.

Gender reassignment

With respect to Trans people, it is unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of intending to, undergoing, or having undergone gender reassignment. "Trans" is an inclusive term for people who identify themselves as transgender or transsexual. The word can be used without offence (as an adjective) to describe people who: ○ is undergoing gender transition.

- identify as someone with a different gender from that in which they were

assigned at birth, but who may or may not have decided to undergo medical treatment.

- choose to dress in the clothing typically worn by the other sex.

Marriage or civil partnership

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of the fact that they are married or in a civil partnership. This applies to both women and men.

Pregnancy and maternity

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of pregnancy, maternity, or parental status of any kind. This applies to both women and men.

Race

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality, or their ethnic origin.

Religion or belief

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion – including those who hold no religious beliefs.

Sex

Sexual harassment of women and men can be found to constitute sex discrimination. For example, asking a woman during an interview if she is planning to have any (more) children constitutes discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Sexual orientation

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because s/he is gay, lesbian or bisexual, or question their sexuality.

Membership of a trade union

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because they belong to a trade union. Manchester Deaf Centre recognises and respects the right of staff to join a trade union.

5. Acting on discriminatory behaviour, harassment, or victimisation

Personal harassment takes many forms but whatever form it takes, it is always serious and is totally unacceptable. Manchester Deaf Centre is sympathetic to the rights and needs of all our staff and volunteers and seeks to protect against

any form of personal harassment or victimisation in the workplace. This could be within the organisation or where an employee or volunteer is harassed in relation to a protected characteristic by third parties such as service users, customers, or other stakeholders.

Victimisation occurs when an employee or volunteer is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he or she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so or being about to do so.

Employees

In the event that an employee is the subject to or the perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, please refer to the organisation's Grievance policy. If an employee is found to have perpetrated discriminatory behaviour, this could amount to gross misconduct and could result in immediate dismissal.

Volunteers

In the event that a volunteer is subject to or the perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, please refer to the organisation's Complaints Policy. If a volunteer is found to have perpetrated discriminatory behaviour, this could result in termination of the volunteer relationship.

Manchester Deaf Centre board of trustees

For members of the board of trustees, any behaviour which breaches any policy and procedures shall be regarded as akin to a disciplinary matter and may result in termination of the membership of the Board of Trustees. Any behaviour, which constitutes a serious act of harassment will be considered akin to an act of gross misconduct and is likely to result in termination of the membership of the Board of Trustees.

Service users

If a service user is the perpetrator of discriminatory behaviour this should be reported to their line manager or the MDC's Senior Managers. This could lead to the temporary or permanent withdrawal of the service.

6. Employment

Recruitment

Manchester Deaf Centre aim is that the diversity of our workforce should reflect that of the community.

Manchester Deaf Centre is committed to recruiting staff in a way that promotes diversity and challenges discrimination. The organisation aims to eliminate discrimination in recruitment and selection on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics and socio- economic background. All members of the recruitment panels will be briefed and trained in ensuring that this policy informs the entire recruitment and selection process.

Manchester Deaf Centre will encourage applications from groups of the community who are traditionally discriminated against when recruiting staff. This will involve consideration of how and where posts are advertised and the form in which job application information is available.

When establishing a new post, consideration will be given to whether the post may represent an exception to these principles, in the sense that it may be subject to an “Occupational Requirement” (as defined by the Equality Act 2010, Schedule 9) or “Genuine Occupational Qualification” (as defined by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Section 7).

7. Employment conditions

All person specifications and job descriptions shall include reference to working to the equality agenda and it will be an expectation that all staff will be committed to the policy and to any appropriate training in this area.

All contracts of employment and working conditions for staff will pay attention to anti-discriminatory legislation and will include for example arrangements for childcare, compassionate leave, parental leave, carer leave, sickness and holiday entitlements.

8. Service delivery

Manchester Deaf Centre aims to make its services accessible to all sections of the community. The organisation’s core purpose is to encourage, support and

develop voluntary and community groups and individuals to have a real influence over the places and communities in which they live.

Manchester Deaf Centre seeks to undertake appropriate measures to ensure that its services do not discriminate against people and furthermore to ensure that the services are inclusive and accessible. Any individual should be able to use Manchester Deaf Centre services without fear of discrimination.

A key challenge to organisations like Manchester Deaf Centre is not just striving to offer an 'inclusive' service but to undertake specific measures to engage and respond to the needs of minority communities. This will necessarily involve active participation of people from these communities at every level in the organisation and a preparedness to look critically at where power is held.

Manchester Deaf Centre aims, through its marketing and communications, to reach under-represented and seldom heard groups among its service users and stakeholders.

In developing programmes of work, staff and volunteers should take a positive and proactive approach to anti-discriminatory practice. Our work should include efforts to promote understanding and awareness of diverse groups in society and engage with issues about equality, rights, and responsibilities.

It is expected that all staff and volunteers will positively challenge discriminatory attitudes or behaviour where they witness or are made aware of it. Where the discrimination has serious implications for an individual or group the matter should be brought to the attention of the management team.

Where a user of Manchester Deaf Centre's services alleges discrimination on the part of a staff member, volunteer, or other service user, this should be taken seriously. The individual should be informed of their right to use the complaints procedure and be offered support in doing this.

9. Recruitment of volunteers

Manchester Deaf Centre's aim is that the diversity of our volunteers should reflect that of the community.

Manchester Deaf Centre is committed to recruiting volunteers in a way that promotes diversity and challenges discrimination. The organisation aims to

eliminate discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics and of socio-economic background.

Manchester Deaf Centre will encourage volunteers from groups of the community who are under-represented. This will involve consideration of how and where opportunities are advertised and working with organisations who register voluntary opportunities with us to ensure they have considered equalities and diversity. This could include for example thinking about the times volunteer opportunities are available to consider childcare or religious needs.

10. Premises and resources

Manchester Deaf Centre we will seek to ensure that appropriate adaptations are made to ensure accessibility to disabled people.

The organisation will aim to deliver its community-based activities from accessible venues.

In the event of securing new premises, the organisation will seek to ensure that accessibility and attention to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is a clear priority.

Manchester Deaf Centre will seek to ensure that appropriate resources [e.g. IT] are in place to ensure that disabled staff and volunteers can fully do their work and disabled users can fully engage with and participate in our services.

11. Monitoring

Monitoring is a way of measuring fairness and equality in employment, volunteering, and service delivery. Manchester Deaf Centre will undertake equality and diversity monitoring with respect to the following fundamental areas:

- Response to job adverts
- Make up of staff team
- Volunteer registrations
- Groups served
- Groups receiving direct support
- Groups receiving grants
- Membership of the Board of Trustees

- Complaints, and suggestions

Monitoring will include ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, and disability as well as other factors which can cause marginalisation such as carer responsibilities and employment status. Regular reviews will take place to ensure that the organisation is inclusive and to measure progress and the impact of any action taken.

The effectiveness of this approach is monitored regularly by comparison with a diversity profile of the city's population. Where formal data do not exist, the research and knowledge of the voluntary and community sector will be used to establish measures which can be used to test Manchester Deaf Centre's effectiveness in reaching the community.

Manchester Deaf Centre recognises that some disadvantaged groups are less likely to provide monitoring information, even anonymised, than others.

Manchester Deaf Centre will identify and address the issues as part of its equality work.

Records will be kept confidential and in line with data protection law, and any information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating Manchester Deaf Centre's work both in terms of staff and volunteer recruitment and service delivery. Information gathered will be normally anonymous and optional except where related to the provision of an appropriate service to an individual.

12. Training

Managers (and any staff involved in recruitment) – Manchester Deaf Centre will ensure that all managers, plus any staff and volunteers in the recruitment process, receive training or relevant guidance on best equality and diversity practice and the practical implications of the Equality Act 2010.

13. Responsibility for implementation

The co-operation of all staff and volunteers is essential for the success of this policy. However, the ultimate responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and codes of

practice, lies with the Board of Trustees and management team. All managers are expected to follow this policy and ensure that all employees, volunteers, service users and other stakeholders do the same.

An Equality and Diversity Plan will be drawn up and monitored on a six-monthly basis.

All Manchester Deaf Centre employees, volunteers service users and stakeholders are required to act in a way that does not subject others to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Employees may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by an Employment Tribunal and ordered to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of those acts.

14. Advice and support

Employees may contact their employee representative or trade union representative if access to such an individual is possible. Other contacts include:

Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)

Telephone (England): 0808 800 0082 Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Website: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Arndale House, The Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3AQ

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com/en

Citizens Advice Bureau

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Further guidance on the Equality Act 2010 can be found at:

HM Government website Gov.uk –

Equality Act 2010: guidance for employers and employees:

www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance

Acas –

general advice on equality including links to information on equal pay and discrimination

www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13636