



# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

**October 2023**

## **Diversity & Inclusion statement**

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way SCA works. We want to recruit, develop, and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background and make best use of their skills, recognising the enrichment that this brings to our organisation and the wider community. At SCA we are guided by our values in everything we do and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us to fulfil our responsibility to make a difference for our staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

We seek to develop a work environment where we treat all employees as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination, should it ever arise and across all protected characteristics. We will remove unnecessary barriers for our employees seeking opportunities through training and development, promotion and career planning, making reasonable adjustments where they are required and where it will enhance the experience for them.

We will continue to support our leaders, staff, volunteers and stakeholders to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in their everyday activities, roles, and functions, with an intention of engendering a sense of belonging for everyone.

**Date produced: October 2023**

**Date of next full review: October 2025**

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## **Respecting Equality and Diversity within the organisation, including fair recruitment procedures**

SCA understands its legal obligations and this policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and all relevant legislation. Further information on The Equality Act 2010 can be found on the Gov.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all areas of Safer Communities Alliance projects and to all staff, by which term we mean all employees, volunteers – including trustees -, seconded staff, agency staff, interns, students on work placement and anyone who is subcontracted to undertake specific duties. Wherever this policy refers to staff or employees, it includes everyone mentioned here unless specifically stated otherwise.

### **Zero tolerance**

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination. The sole exception to this is where a specific service requires us to implement positive discrimination. This may require us to recruit candidates of a specific sex, to safeguard the users or staff of that specific service; for example, a service for very vulnerable young women may require that we recruit only female workers to work with that group, or – conversely – a service for young men displaying harmful sexual behaviour may recruit only male workers to work with that group. Where this is the case, the service model for that service will explicitly set out why recruitment for workers in that service will be focused specifically that sex and this will be reflected in the recruitment process.

To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for everyone and not to discriminate on grounds of the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are:

Age	Disability
Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership
Pregnancy and Maternity	Race
Religion or Belief	Sex
Sexual Orientation	

SCA will also endeavour to work beyond the Equality Act 2010, with additional groups not specified in the act such as part time workers, carers and those who have previously engaged in criminal activity.

## **Definitions**

The Equality Act 2010 describes certain forms of discrimination. All staff and volunteers should be aware of these ways of discrimination.

***They are: -***

### **Inclusion and Respect**

Every client and staff member of SCA should be made to feel equally welcome and included at all SCA's activities.

Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in SCA.

### **Direct Discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances because of a protected characteristic.

For example: Paul, a Senior Manager turns down Jenny's application for promotion to a supervisor position. Jenny who is a lesbian, learns that Paul did this because he believes the team she applied to manage, are homophobic. Paul thought that Jenny's sexual orientation would prevent her from gaining the team's respect and managing them effectively. This is direct sexual orientation discrimination against Jenny.

### **Perceptive discrimination**

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

For example: Jim is aged 45 years but looks much younger. Many people assume that he is in his mid-20s. He is not allowed to represent the company at an international meeting because the Managing Director thinks that he is too young. Jim has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic and also an assumption that a younger person could not adequately represent the company.

### **Associative discrimination**

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses any one or more of the protected characteristics.

For example: June works as a project manager and is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after she tells her boss that her mother, who lives at home, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination against June because of her association with her disabled mother and assumptions of what this may mean for her commitment to the role.

## **Indirect Discrimination**

Indirect discrimination can happen when there is a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Employers can only justify indirect discrimination if they can show that they acted fairly and reasonably in managing their business (e.g., to achieve a legitimate aim) and they would need to show that they had considered other, less discriminatory alternatives. Like direct discrimination, indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not, unless it can be fully justified.

For example: A small finance company needs its staff to work late on a Friday afternoon to analyse stock prices in the American finance market. The figures arrive late on Friday because of the global time differences. During the winter, some staff would like to be released early on Friday afternoon in order to be home before sunset – a requirement of their religion. They propose to make the time up later during the remainder of the week. The company is not able to agree to this request because the American figures are necessary to the business, they need to be worked on immediately and the company is too small to have anyone else able to do the work.

The requirement to work on Friday afternoons is not unlawful indirect discrimination, as it meets a legitimate business aim and there is no alternative means available.

## **Failure to make Reasonable Adjustments**

The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that disabled people have, as far as is reasonable, the same access to everything that is involved in getting and doing a job as a non-disabled person. This may mean changing the way in which employment is structured, the removal of physical barriers and/or providing extra support for a disabled worker or job applicant.

The employer is under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove or reduce or prevent the obstacles that face a disabled worker or job applicant.

The employer only must adjust where they are aware – or should reasonably be aware – that someone has a disability. Many of the adjustments your employer can make will not be particularly expensive, and they are not required to do more than it is reasonable for them to do.

## **Victimisation**

Victimisation is when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

For example: Anne makes a formal complaint against her Manager because she feels that she has been discriminated against because of marriage. Although the complaint is resolved through the organisation's grievance procedures, Anne is subsequently ostracised by her colleagues, including her Manager. She could claim victimisation.

For example: Lydia is pregnant and works at a call centre. The Manager knows that Lydia is pregnant but still disciplines her for taking too many toilet breaks, as he would for any other member of staff. This is discrimination because of pregnancy

and maternity, as this characteristic doesn't require the normal comparison of treatment with other employees.

## **Harassment**

The law defines harassment as "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, 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."

For example: Peter is disabled and is claiming harassment against his line Manager after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability. Richard shares an office with Peter and he too is claiming harassment, even though he is not disabled, as the Manager's behaviour has also created an offensive environment for him.

## **Sexual harassment**

This is unwanted behaviour which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. A person should not be treated less favourably because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

For example: Steve is continually being called "gay" and other related names by a group of employees at his work. Homophobic comments have been posted on the staff notice board about him, by people from this group. Steve was recently pushed to the floor by one member of the group but is too scared to take action. Steve is not gay but heterosexual; furthermore, the group know he isn't gay. This is harassment because of sexual orientation.

## **Pregnancy, Maternity and Paternity**

In employment, SCA will endeavour to provide time-off for prenatal and antenatal care appointments. Employees are entitled to paid time off, to keep appointments for antenatal care made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife, or registered health visitor.

Antenatal care is not restricted to medical examinations. For example, it could also include relaxation classes and parent craft classes, if necessary.

SCA will uphold all paternity rights for its employees.

## **Whistle blowing**

There may be occasions where staff or volunteers feel that colleagues are not following the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy and their behaviour or attitudes are questionable. Those making a complaint in good faith will be given a full, fair and sensitive hearing and may do so without fear of subsequent victimisation.

## **Policy Actions**

### **Recruitment of staff**

SCA ensures that all recruitment for vacancies is done fairly and that applicants are judged on their aptitude and ability alone. The recruitment process is set out in the SCA Safeguarding policy but includes:

- Advertising which includes a statement showing that SCA is a fair and inclusive employer
- An application pack including a job description, a person specification and an application form
- Applications are then shortlisted using a marking scheme, by at least two people
  
- At interview, candidates are interviewed by at least two people and scored using a marking scheme
- The successful candidate will then be asked if there are any reasonable adjustments needed to make the workplace more accessible or to be considered to help them do their work.

### **Induction of staff and volunteers**

All employees will be required to read this policy on joining the organisation and as part of the induction process, staff and volunteers are required to sign to uphold the policy. The principles set out in this policy are also reflected in all contracts and project plans. We will expect anyone we sub-contract or with whom we work in partnership, to work in line with this policy or to demonstrate that they have their own appropriate Equality policy and practices in place.

It is a condition of employment that all employees respect and act in accordance with this policy. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary procedures being instigated, which could lead to dismissal.

### **SCA clients**

SCA is open to all and SCA will do all it reasonably can to accommodate the individual needs of any people accessing its projects, activities, or training.

### **Training**

SCA will ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees have regular training in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and are aware of how their bias, actions and words can affect those around them and the need for all to be aware of different forms of discrimination, to role of privilege and the importance of allyship. Training needs of staff and volunteers are discussed at supervision meetings and an appropriate action plan will be drawn up. This is the responsibility of the line Manager, who may delegate this to another appropriate employee. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, will be a regular item on the Directors' meeting agenda.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff and volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves and acting in accordance with this policy. Employees should inform their manager, Bali Rodgers or Ceri Griffiths, if they know or suspect that discrimination or harassment is occurring.

## **Positive images**

SCA will always endeavour to portray positive images and role models in their publications and website, which does not discriminate against anyone. Images will be representative of the area of Kent and Medway in which we work and also the demographics we serve.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

As a charity, we must carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all new policies, procedures, projects and services, to prevent unfair discrimination. The Equality Impact Assessment focuses on 9 areas, cognisant of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

An Equality Impact Assessment is used to anticipate and identify the impact of new policies, procedures, projects, or services on these areas.

Managers will then make sure that any potential negative consequences are removed or balanced out, by either changing the policy, procedure, project, or service or introducing other measures alongside it.

## **Active monitoring and review**

To ensure that this policy and the procedures relating to it remain effective this policy will be reviewed Annually

## ***Related policies and procedures***

The following policies and procedures may need to be consulted in conjunction with this policy as applicable:

- Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Conduct Code
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Complaints Policy (Making a Complaint)
- Procurement Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

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