



Equality & Diversity Policy

Adopted by council: December 2016

Approved by council: October 2022

Next review: October 2025

The Trustees in adopting this policy fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of monitoring and implementing the policy within ECI.

Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Background

- 1.1 ECI is the legal organisation to which several different community projects belong. It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Throughout this policy, ECI refers to the organisation that comprises the work of individual projects and any support services that are provided corporately.
- 1.2 ECI accepts that certain groups and individuals in society are denied equal opportunity and experience discrimination. ECI commits itself to developing an Equality and Diversity Policy with associated training and good practice in all aspects of its activities, in the services it provides, in its practices as an employer and in the way it works with others.
- 1.3 Ensuring Diversity, Equal Opportunities or "Equality of Opportunity" do not just happen but must be actively promoted and pursued by all individuals involved in the different parts of the organisation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to:
 - Clarify, emphasise, and define ECI's commitment to preventing discrimination and to the promotion of diversity and equality of opportunity;
 - Underline our legal responsibilities in this area;
 - Ensure there are equal opportunities for all clients/users, and that all clients/users are treated based on personal need.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all potential as well as actual trustees, committee members, employees, volunteers and organisations/individuals who use our services.

3. Statement of Policy

- 3.1 ECI is committed to taking positive action to implement and adhere to, amongst its committees, employers, volunteers and organisations/individuals to whom it provides services, the various Acts of Parliament which legislate against discrimination, most recently the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 ECI wishes to identify and challenge all types of discrimination, including:
 - 3.2.1 Direct discrimination, defined under the Equality Act 2010 as treating a person less favourably than another person in the same circumstances because of a so-called 'protected characteristic':
 - Disability (defined in the Act as 'a person with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities')
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
 - 3.2.2 ECI will also seek not to directly discriminate based on:
 - Age
 - Social, economic or employment status
 - Unrelated physical or mental health condition (e.g., HIV status)
 - Marital status or caring responsibility
 - Unrelated criminal conviction
 - 3.2.3 Indirect discrimination, that is, applying a condition or requirement which disadvantages groups more than others.

3.2.3 Institutional discrimination, that is, when the routine policies, practices, procedures or organisation of an institution in effect exclude or marginalise disadvantaged groups.

4. Implementation

The statement of policy set out in Section 3 will be implemented in Sections 5 to 11 which follow.

5. Service Delivery

5.1 ECI will seek to ensure that its services are delivered in such a way that they are as accessible as possible to people from groups which are discriminated against.

5.2 When services are being planned, consideration will be given to issues such as:

- the physical accessibility of the venues
- the time of day at which they are held
- the need for crèche or other support facilities
- the charges (if any) that are made
- the means by which they are publicised and promoted, including ensuring that written material can be reproduced in large print, etc,
- making reasonable adjustments to enable the needs of individuals to be taken account of so that they can make use of these services
- and any other factors which enhance the ability of people from groups with a 'protected characteristic' or other groups experiencing disadvantage to make use of these services.

6. Employment, Recruitment & Selection

6.1 Employment

6.1.1 ECI is committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer. The aim of its policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds described in 3.2.1.

6.2 Recruitment

6.2.1 The recruitment process is intended to ensure a wide response to employment vacancies, reflecting the diversity of potential employees, within the requirements of performing the job.

6.2.2 Applications forms should be written and presented in an accessible way. Questions should not be asked of candidates, at either application or interview stage, unless they can clearly be justified in terms of their relevance to the candidate's capability to carry out the role. Health enquiries cannot be made until a post is offered to a particular candidate.

6.2.3 All permanent posts over 10 hours per week, or temporary posts lasting at least 6 months, will normally be advertised externally alongside any other methods used, except where specifically allowed under the terms of the recruitment and selection policy.

6.2.4 ECI will, according to financial limits, make these vacancies known through a wide variety of recruitment sources including newspapers, job centres, internal advertisement and agency networks. Particular attention will be given to targeting advertising at groups of people with a 'protected characteristic' or other groups experiencing disadvantage who are currently under-represented amongst our staff and job applicants.

6.3 Selection

6.3.1 Every job advertised will have a job description from which a person specification will be drafted. This will list all the essential requirements an individual will need in order to undertake the tasks detailed in the job description.

6.3.2 The selection process will be carried out according to specified job-related criteria detailed in the person specification. Individuals will be assessed against these criteria based on application forms, interview performance or other practical tests designed to test the applicant.

6.3.3 Where two or more candidates have been assessed as equally capable of carrying out a particular job, then the panel may consider a 'protected characteristic' when deciding who is offered the post.

6.4 Recruitment and Selection Policy

6.4.1 ECI has an explicit recruitment and selection policy which incorporates the principles outlined elsewhere in this policy.

7. **Learning & Development**

7.1 ECI is committed to the learning and development of all its staff and volunteers in order to allow them to gain and develop skills and knowledge, realise their full potential and develop life and career opportunities, in line with the needs of the organisation as a whole.

7.2 To put this commitment into practice, ECI has developed a learning and development policy across the organisation, which will be reviewed every two years.

7.3 Training in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is available to staff and volunteers including trustees and Committee members.

8. **Conditions of Service**

8.1 Conditions of Service should not limit individuals or groups from roles within the organisation unless there are necessary requirements.

8.2 ECI will operate an open and transparent policy on pay throughout the organisation, including making available a formal pay structure to all staff and trustees.

8.3 ECI will seek to ensure that all other policies and procedures are developed and revised in line with good practice and the latest changes in equality legislation. Examples of areas where ECI seeks to promote equality and diversity through other policies include dependent care leave, sick pay, paid paternity leave, a supportive approach to flexible working arrangements, etc.

9. **Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures**

9.1 ECI will take seriously all grievances or complaints concerning discrimination. All acts of abuse or harassment or where people behave in a discriminatory or prejudiced way against employees, volunteers or users, will be treated as gross misconduct for the purpose of implementing the disciplinary procedures.

10. Monitoring

- 10.1 The Chief Executive will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of this Policy. Project managers and leads will be responsible for identifying and raising any practice issues in relations to Equality and Diversity to the Chief Executive and Operations Manager.
- 10.2 The Operations Manager will oversee the recording and reporting of Equality and Diversity data from recruitment forms for both paid staff and volunteers, and data gathered in relation to people who use our services; and the maintenance of a central record of all diversity training undertaken by staff, trustees and volunteers.
- 10.3 This data, and any practice issued identified by projects, will be reviewed at managers' meetings. The Chief Executive will be required to report back to the trustees on issues identified at managers' meetings as necessary and refer any complaints, grievances or disciplinary cases in relation to Equality and Diversity to the board.
- 10.4 The monitoring data should be reviewed annually by the ECI Council.

11. Awareness

- 11.1 This outline policy will be incorporated in information readily accessible to people who use ECI's services.