



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Last review: July 2026

Next review: July 2029

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

If you need any guidance or assistance in understanding or applying this policy, please contact us on info@eci.org.uk or 01392 205800

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Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

At ECI, we believe that everyone should feel respected, valued, welcomed and able to participate fully in our work and services.

We recognise that people experience barriers and disadvantage in different ways. We are committed not only to preventing discrimination, but also to actively creating an inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated, people can be themselves, and everyone has equitable access to opportunities, support and services.

We aim to be an organisation where staff, volunteers, trustees and service users feel safe to speak up, ask questions, challenge bias respectfully and contribute their ideas.

2. Purpose of Policy

This policy isn't just about preventing discrimination; it is also about creating belonging.

This policy encourages:

- positive intent
- curiosity
- respectful challenge
- learning together
- listening to different experiences
- inclusion of wider communities

ECI is committed to:

- Promote inclusion and belonging.
- Remove barriers to participation.
- Design accessible services and workplaces.
- Listen to people with lived experience.
- Encourage respectful discussion and learning.
- Challenge prejudice, bias and stereotypes.
- Consider equality impacts when making decisions.

We recognise and value diversity in all its forms and will not tolerate discrimination based on any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise that people may experience disadvantage due to factors such as caring responsibilities, socio-economic background, digital inclusion, health conditions, neurodiversity, homelessness, refugee status or other life circumstances.

This better reflects the communities ECI supports.

3. Our commitment to accessibility

ECI is committed to making our workplaces, meetings, communications and services as accessible as possible.

We will:

- Make reasonable adjustments where required.
- Ask people what support they need.
- Consider accessibility when planning events and services.
- Use inclusive communication practices.
- Seek to remove physical, digital and organisational barriers.

We recognise the value and strengths of disabled and neurodivergent people and are committed to creating environments where people can thrive through appropriate support, flexibility and reasonable adjustments.

We recognise that flexibility is an important part of creating an inclusive workplace. Where possible and appropriate, we will consider flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments that enable staff and volunteers to contribute effectively while maintaining their wellbeing.

4. Respectful Working Together

We expect everyone involved with ECI to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Be open to learning from different experiences and perspectives.
- Ask questions respectfully and with positive intent.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour constructively, when safe to do so, or raise their concerns with an appropriate person.
- Listen to and amplify under-represented voices.
- Take responsibility for creating an inclusive environment.

5. Definitions

Diversity

While diverse means variety, diversity means different. Both words are interconnected but have a slight distinction. What is important is that you understand that you alone cannot be diverse. I, as an individual cannot be diverse by myself. The word diverse is most effective when used in context to a group. So, a group of people can be diverse and a company can be a leader in diversity if they employ a diverse group of people. It is also important to note that increasing diversity can look very different in different organisations, industries and regions.

Inclusion

To put it simply, inclusion is integration. It means the integration of a variety of differences or the integration of diversity. Inclusion creates an environment and a culture that makes everyone feel welcomed, valued, and involved. As a matter of fact, sometimes, even using words like “diverse” when referencing an individual or the word “minority” can inhibit your ability to create inclusion.

Equity

People often confuse equity with equality. While both have the same goal of promoting

fairness, the actions to get there differ. Equality means treating everyone the same. For example, giving everyone equal access to apply to an open position. Equity, on the other hand, means removing all hurdles and obstacles that are preventing equal access. Equity closes what has long been considered an “opportunity gap.” In the context of the hiring process, if people have equal access to the hiring process, then we need to look at those hurdles that are preventing certain groups from experiencing that access. As recruiters and hiring managers, it is our responsibility to identify and remove those hurdles.

Source: [How we Define Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at JTC — Jennifer Tardy Consulting - Diversity Recruiting Expert + Career Coach](#)

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum

ECI maintains an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum comprising staff, volunteers and trustees.

The forum supports ECI by:

- Providing opportunities for learning and discussion.
- Reviewing organisational policies and practices.
- Identifying barriers to inclusion.
- Listening to diverse experiences and perspectives.
- Recommending improvements to services and employment practices.

7. Service Delivery

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.

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, easy to read, symbolised, spoken word, 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.

8. Employment, Recruitment & Selection

Employment

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 above.

Recruitment

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.

Application forms should be written and presented in an accessible way. Questions regarding protected characteristics 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, or where it is an occupational requirement as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Health enquiries cannot be made until a post is offered to a particular candidate.

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.

ECI will, according to financial limits, make these vacancies known through a wide variety of recruitment sources including digital sources, 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 disadvantages who are currently under-represented amongst our staff and job applicants.

Selection

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.

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.

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.

Recruitment and Selection Policy

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

9. Learning & Development

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.

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

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

10. Conditions of Service

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

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.

11. Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures

ECI will take seriously all grievances or complaints concerning discrimination. All acts of abuse or harassment or where people behaved 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.

12. Responsibilities

Trustees

- Provide oversight and challenge.
- Ensure EDI remains a strategic priority.

Chief Executive and Managers

- Lead by example.
- Ensure policies are implemented fairly.
- Address discrimination and exclusion.

Staff, Volunteers and Trustees

- Treat others respectfully.
- Follow this policy.
- Raise concerns when they witness inappropriate behaviour.
- Contribute to an inclusive culture.

13. Awareness

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