

Darlington Culture Volunteer Policies and Procedures Equality and Diversity

Equality for individuals means that **individuals are valued equally**. It does not mean treating everyone the same. Equality is about creating a society that is fair, where everyone has the same access to the economic, social, cultural and political aspects of society.

Everyone should have **equal access, equal say and equal legal protection**

Our policy is developed from the Equality Act 2010 that provides consistency as far as possible and extends to protect characteristics that were not previously covered by the previous discrimination legislation. These protected characteristics include:

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

Diversity simply means **different and varied**. UK society is diverse, people are different in their:

- **Interests:** the things you interested in
- **Beliefs:** ideas and values, religious, political
- **Age:** baby, teenager or an adult
- **Lifestyle:** work patterns, skilled, manual worker, family life, single or married, live in your own house
- **Personal characteristics:** gender, sexual orientation and disabilities
- **Cultural identities:** ethnicity, race, language

As we live in a diverse society, some people can have negative attitudes:

Prejudice

‘A preconceived opinion or idea that leads to bias actions or a harmful situation’

Prejudice is an attitude and becomes discriminatory when an individual acts upon it

Stereotyping

A fixed or distorted generalisation made about all members of a particular group, a rigid judgement which does not take into account ‘the here and now’.

These attitudes lead to

- **Oppression:** the misuse of power over people
- **Discrimination:** unfair treatment
- **Exploitation:** using people unfairly for one’s own ends
- **Disempowerment:** taking away individual control
- **Denial of rights:** stopping people accessing their rights

Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 lists **six different types** of discrimination that a person may face:

- **Direct Discrimination**
- **Discrimination by association**
- **Discrimination by perception**
- **Indirect Discrimination**
- **Harassment**
- **Victimisation**

Direct Discrimination

Being treated less favourably on the grounds of a protected characteristic that you possess.

An example might be someone who is passed over for promotion because she is a woman and her managers are worried that family commitments will interfere with work commitments

Discrimination by association

Direct discrimination against someone because of their association with a person who possess a protected characteristic

An example would be a child who is not accepted into a nursery because he or she has a disabled sibling: the nursery has a policy on giving preference to accept siblings but in this case they believe they would not be able to cope with a disabled child

Discrimination by perception

Discrimination based on the perception that a person possess a protected characteristic

For example if someone was believed to be gay and discriminated against based on this perception, it would be discrimination by perception

Indirect Discrimination

Where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally, but has the effect of putting an employee or job applicant with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to others

An example would be failing to provide religiously appropriate food when catering – indirect discrimination on grounds of religion or belief.

However an organisation or company can cite this action as a legitimate aim if:

- There is a good reason for what it is trying to achieve and;
- The way of doing it is appropriate, necessary, fair and reasonable
- There is not another way to achieve the same aim

Harassment

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.

Victimisation

When an employee is treated less favourably than others