

Equality, Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy

This policy document provides Young Epilepsy/St Piers (Young Epilepsy) with the overall framework to meet its commitment to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. The organisation recognises the importance of needing to promote equality across all groups whilst recognising the diverse needs of individuals as well as tackling discrimination.

Policy Statement

Young Epilepsy's approach to Equality, Diversity Inclusion and Belonging (EDI&B) relates to the children and young adults we support, as well as our staff, volunteers, partnerships, and the wider community involved in the delivery of our work.

We believe the differences individuals bring, with their own culture and range of life experiences, brings creativity, vitality, and innovation to the organisation, and directly benefits the children and young people we support.

This document outlines our commitment and responsibilities to provide an inclusive culture which treats all individuals with dignity and respect, outside of a compliance necessity. This is founded on placing a high value on diversity and recognising the differences people bring and is underpinned by our EDI&B strategy, organisational values, and behaviours.

Our Equality, Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Statement

At Young Epilepsy & St Piers we remain committed to creating a culture in which; everyone is treated equally, where dignity, mutual respect and inclusivity are valued, and we embed diversity as a principle in all our activities and relationships. This is at the core of our work with children and young people, who often tell us that they feel excluded by their condition or more often, misunderstanding by peers, professionals, and society at large.

We strive to create a diverse, engaged, and inspirational workforce to the young people we support and represent.

Our aim is to enable all employees to SHINE at work.

Benefits of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDI&B)

At Young Epilepsy we support children, young adults and their families from a range of different backgrounds. Each young person is recognised as a unique individual to ensure their views, family beliefs and cultures are taken into consideration and always respected. Whilst children and young adults are supported by Young Epilepsy, regardless of which part of our service support they are accessing, we believe our focus on EDI&B will increase their confidence and provide them with a wide variety of opportunities to meet and mix with other youngsters.

At the same time, the benefits of a diverse workforce are well recognised and include a culture where difference is visibly welcomed and where people are actively included in order that we benefit from their unique talents in the provision of a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of the young people we support. Having a diverse workforce means by working together we can better challenge each other to constantly improve service delivery. Staff are appreciated when they are valued for their individuality and their unique offering to the team(s) on which they work. This improves job satisfaction, as well as recruitment and retention rates.

By creating a culture where our differences are valued, and celebrated, employees feel supported to fulfil their potential and safely raise any concerns.

The principles of EDI&B are extended to everyone involved in our work, including the families & friends of the young people we support, volunteers, other partners, and the local community. This ensures everyone's views are valued, and this enables us to develop best practice, to be open and transparent and to ensure all our policies and procedures adhere to this philosophy.

We understand how the differences in culture and range of life experiences brings with it creativity, vitality, and innovation to the charity.

The Purpose of our Approach

At Young Epilepsy, our approach to EDI&B is to:

- Explain the legislative framework within which Young Epilepsy policies and procedures must operate.
- Ensure all the children and young adults we support, our staff, volunteers and other partners associated with our work are treated with equality and fairly when decisions are made that affect:
 - The quality or service they receive from us, or
 - Their recruitment, retention, training, development and working practices.
- Ensure we value every young person we support, and every employee's and volunteer's contribution irrespective of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or family status, disability,

age, trade union membership or economic status, political activities, social class or where the person lives

- Deliver staff training to raise awareness and the importance of ED&I and the benefits of a diverse workforce

Legal Framework

The main legislation applicable to this policy is the 'Equality Act 2010'. This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. There are nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act which are as follows:

- Age. Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 to 30 year olds)
- Disability
- Gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

Discrimination which happens because of one or more of these characteristics is unlawful under the Act. Everyone has some of these characteristics - for example, gender or age - so the Act is there to protect everyone from discrimination.

It is important to understand these definitions to avoid unintentionally discriminating against someone. The Equality Act not only impacts on policies but also 'practices', i.e. things you do which are not covered by a written policy, perhaps at a local or group level. These could include areas like recruitment decisions, rotas, training, meetings, social occasions and cultural factors like teasing, banter and/or use of language.

Other legislation to be aware of, alongside the Equality Act are:

- Children's and Families Act 2014
 - Care Act 2014
 - Prevent Strategy
 - Keeping Young People Safe
 - Autism Act 2009
 - Human Rights Act 1998.
-

Whilst the Charity's approach is not driven solely by legislation, it recognises the importance of ensuring that Young Epilepsy meets its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice which accompany the legislation.

The Charity's approach to EDI&B forms part of our internal quality assurance processes to ensure that a high-quality standard of service is maintained and to meet the requirements of government policies and initiatives. This policy should be read in conjunction with other Young Epilepsy policies and procedures.

Approach, scope and responsibility for the implementation of this policy

The Trustees, Chief Executive and Executive Directors have a responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy in relation to the young people we support, our staff, volunteers and other partners associated with our work.

It is important to note that, as an employer, Young Epilepsy is potentially legally responsible for acts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation carried out by its employees in the course of their employment.

Young Epilepsy also has a legal responsibility for the acts of agents carried out with the authority of the charity. An agent is someone we have instructed to do something on our behalf, but who is not employed by us.

This applies in situations where:

- An employee was acting in the course of their employment, or
- The agent was carrying out our instructions.

It does not matter whether, or not, Young Epilepsy knew about or approved of what the employee or agent did.

Employees must ensure that their behaviour at work creates an environment which is free from any form of harassment, victimisation, and all other forms of discrimination. Employees should be aware that if they are involved in discriminatory actions or practice, they may not only face disciplinary action but also legal proceedings against themselves as individuals.

The overall objective of Young Epilepsy's approach to EDI&B is to achieve the following in employment policies and practices, in services, and in engagement with partners and the communities within which we operate:

- Develop an organisational culture which embraces an inclusive approach
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
 - Promote equality of opportunity
 - Promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds
-

- Foster a culture of respect and understanding between people of diverse cultures, backgrounds, circumstances and identities

The charity recognises that:

- discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time
- people have a range of diverse needs and our services must be designed or delivered in different ways to respond to these needs

The scope this approach applies to all the children and young people we support, the staff working within the organisation including employees, contractors, volunteers and staff from other organisations working on charities premises. It also applies to parents and visitors.

This policy and its guidance applies to all our premises and all staff working in other premises, including any place where the occasion can be identified with either the requirements of Young Epilepsy or with social events linked to the organisation.

Aims

Young Epilepsy aims to:

- Incorporate consideration of EDI&B principles from the onset in all its policies, plans, strategies, and procurement etc. throughout service delivery.
- Undertake equality impact assessments to measure the impact of policies and services and to determine the needs of the children and young people we support, our employees, volunteers, and the public
- Identify the EDI&B outcomes for these groups as necessary
- Reflect the diversity of the geographical areas it serves in publications, events and other marketing and communications activities
- Follow the social model of disability
- Apply the principles of this policy to suppliers of goods and services to the charity.

The aims relating to our service delivery to children and young adults are to:

- Provide appropriate, accessible, and effective support services and facilities without discrimination or prejudice
 - Provide clear information about our services in appropriate formats or languages which meet people's needs
 - Monitor our services to ensure those receiving support all receive fair access and outcomes and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent
-

- Consult as far as is reasonably possible, with children and young adults and their families when making decisions about the support they receive, taking into consideration the young person's capacity.
- Respond promptly and fairly to any complaints received including those relating to discrimination

The aims in relation to employment are to:

- Carry out objectives and activities laid out in the EDI&B strategic plan.
- Ensure that our employment policies and procedures do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual on unjustifiable grounds
- Work to achieve a workforce that represents the children and young adults we support
- Monitor recruitment and selection processes, training and development opportunities, disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment and capability procedures by the nine protected characteristics and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent
- Promote a culture of fairness and respect in its employment policies, procedures and practices
- Provide appropriate training and information sharing for employees at every level on equality, diversity and human rights issues. Including EDI&B training on induction, essential eLearning for all staff, and essential EDI&B face to face training for managers,
- Protect employees from bullying, harassment and violence and investigate all claims of bullying and harassment that are made
- Respond to the particular needs of employees including those relating to ethnic group, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief.
- Proactively strive to create a culture where diversity is embraced and celebrated
- Create inclusive employment opportunities through offering flexible working options, making reasonable adjustments to roles and providing development pathways for all

Data Collection

As part of our EDI&B activity, Young Epilepsy collect and collate relevant data on all the children/young adults we support and staff to inform the EDI&B agenda. Analysis of these data sets enables us to undertake gap analyses to identify issues that require particular redress.

Young Epilepsy also monitors EDI&B data of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion).

We use this data to report on gender pay gap, disability pay gap and ethnicity pay gap.


We also use the data to monitor the number of people within certain minority groups and those that hold protected characteristics and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

Data collection and analysis will be agreed in line with relevant policies, procedures and relevant GDPR obligations and will be reported in line with governance requirements.

Shine Working Group

Young Epilepsy has its own EDI&B (Shine) working group which meets half termly to consider and assure the work we do in this area. The Shine working group is underpinned by staff networks, including LGBTQ+, Unpaid Carers, Black Asian and Minority Ethnicity, Menopause, Disability, Parent Carers and Interfaith, with a representative of each network feeding back into the Shine working group. The working group is also made up of staff representatives and select members of the Operational Leadership Team.

The Shine Working Group are responsible for leading on the development and implementation of the organisation's EDI&B strategy and roadmap, as well as for bringing any areas of concern to the Trust Board and Executive as soon as these are highlighted.

This procedure is agreed by the Director of HR and will be implemented by all Departments.	
Signed: 	Date: 25 October 2023
Name: Sarah Stookes Title: Director of HR	
	Date of next review: 1 November 2025

Version table

Date of creation: September 2021

Approved by:

Version no.	Date of changes	Reasons for change	Changes made by
1	07.10.2021	General review	
2	22.09.23	Update in line with EDI&B Strategy	Tudor Fenwick