

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy

Document Control

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1.0 Introduction

Mahdlo Youth Zone recognises its responsibilities to ensure the fair and equal treatment of everyone employed and those individuals who undertake work on Youth Zone premises. Mahdlo aims to create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected, and able to be themselves and celebrate their difference.

It is the Youth Zone's policy that all employment decisions (such as pay, flexible working requests, selection for employment, promotion or training) are based on merit and legitimate business needs.

This policy applies to all employees of Mahdlo Youth Zone, workers (engaged through, or by, an employment agency) and volunteers. It also applies to sub-contractors, in that we will take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviours whilst on Youth Zone premises. However, if any issues become apparent with regard to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party's behaviour towards others involved at the Youth Zone, i.e. staff, young people, parents, or other workers engaged, these will be taken very seriously, and those individuals asked to leave the premises. The Chief Executive or HR and Business Support Coordinator will take the appropriate course of action.

It is recognised that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups, but the Youth Zone intends to strive to ensure that differences do not become barriers to participation, access and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met.

This policy does not give contractual rights to individual employees. Mahdlo reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time, although we will notify you in writing of any changes.

1.1 Definitions

Key Terminology	Definition
Equity	Although both equality and equity promote fairness, equality achieves this through treating everyone the same regardless of need, while equity achieves this through treating people differently depending on their individual needs.
Diversity	Any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. It is about empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different, with reference to their protected characteristics (detailed below), education, or specific lived experience.
Inclusion	Practices in which distinct groups or individuals having different backgrounds are accepted and welcomed. These differences could be protected characteristics, socioeconomic status, educational background, sector experience, or personality traits, such as introverts and extroverts. Inclusion is a sense of belonging. Inclusive cultures allow people to feel respected and valued for who they are as an individual or a group.
Protected characteristic	Protected characteristics refer to the nine characteristics that are protected in the Equality Act (2010). The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/ civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

2.0 What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unlawful when it takes place on one of the following grounds (the 'protected characteristics') as detailed in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of religion/belief)
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

1.2 Types of Discrimination

Type of Discrimination	Description
Direct Discrimination	When someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic. It may not amount to discrimination should it be shown that less favourable treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Indirect Discrimination	When someone discriminates against another based on application of a provision, practice or criterion that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. It may not amount to indirect discrimination should it be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Discrimination by association	This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Perception 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.

Mahdlo Youth Zone will not discriminate directly or indirectly when dealing with requests for time off for religious and belief observance. However, employees need to be aware that the law does not confer an automatic right for employees to have time off, or to be provided with facilities to undertake religious observance.

We will not treat any employee unfairly, based on their membership of a trade union.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, whatever their age, sex, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

3.0 Disability and Duty to make adjustments

Any employee or volunteer who considers they may have a disability is strongly encouraged to speak with their line manager if they experience difficulties at work because of their disability, so that reasonable adjustments can be discussed. Any disclosure will be treated in confidence, and matters will be handled sensitively. We will, where reasonably practicable, in line with the Equality Act 2010, strive to accommodate reasonable adjustments to working conditions, the working environment, recruitment processes and terms and conditions of employment to help overcome practical difficulties created by a particular disability. Mahdlo Youth Zone will take such steps as is reasonable related to a provision, criterion or practice or a physical feature which would put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

4.0 Recruitment

Recruitment to Mahdlo Youth Zone will take into consideration the diverse community we serve, and the young people we work with. As such, a sensible approach to equality in recruitment and equality in safeguarding will be applied.

Vacancies will be advertised openly either internally or externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example, in situations of potential redundancy.

Prejudice during the recruitment process is common, and those involved in recruiting should be mindful that any assessments should be completed fairly, against the person specification for the role and not in line with personal beliefs or values, assumptions or personal bias. Therefore, all decisions relating to appointments will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- A detailed role profile will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties or competencies of the post.
- An objective and sufficiently detailed person specification (where applicable) will be defined from the role profile, specifying only the criteria that are relevant to the job and reflect genuine business needs
- Shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria, and will always be carried out by more than one person. Written records of the short-listing process will be retained.
- Candidates will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made (other than with a view to making reasonable adjustments to enable someone to attend the interview and selection process).
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the Youth Zone.

The Youth Zone will, where possible, ensure that recruiting managers attend unconscious bias training, to optimise our processes for diversity and inclusion.

5.0 Positive Action

For some recruitment and promotion exercises, we may take positive action to address under-representation in our workforce by encouraging applications from people from certain under-represented groups. For example, we may state in advertisements that we particularly welcome applications from certain groups, we may target our advertising towards particular groups, we might hold open days, work shadowing opportunities targeted at particular groups, or we might provide training for particular groups to prepare them for promotion. However, we will ultimately make recruitment and promotion decisions on merit and not on the basis of protected characteristics.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Ensuring an equal opportunity workplace is a collective task, shared between the Youth Zone and all members of staff, workers and volunteers. All employees and volunteers have personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy and to treat others with dignity and respect at all times.

6.1 Role of the Chief Executive

- It is the Chief Executive's responsibility to implement the ED&I Policy.
- It is the Chief Executive's role to ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.
- The Chief Executive promotes the principle of equal opportunity and ED&I in all aspects of Youth Zone life.
- The Chief Executive treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

6.2 Role of the Senior Leadership Team

- The Senior Leadership Team will have responsibility for supporting everyone in implementing this policy.
- The Team will provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- The Team will ensure that their own behaviour and that of the colleagues they manage complies with the principles of this policy.
- The Team, alongside the Chief Executive, will provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.

6.3 Role of Youth Zone Staff

- All staff will ensure that all other members of staff are treated fairly, equally and with respect and will maintain awareness of the ED&I Policy.
- All staff will strive to promote positive images, based on race, sex and disability (and all other protected characteristics) and challenge stereotypical images throughout the Youth Zone.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination, drawing them to the attention of the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team or the Chair of the board (in the case of incidents involving the Chief Executive).

7.0 Monitoring

Where monitoring of equality data takes place, Mahdlo Youth Zone commits to adhering to the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, and all data will be managed accordingly.

8.0 Procedure

8.1 What to do if you have been discriminated against

If you believe you may have been discriminated against, please tell us. You can speak informally with your manager or the HR and Business Support Coordinator. If you want to make a more formal complaint, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our **Grievance Procedure**. If you believe there has been any bullying or harassment, then you should raise the matter through our **Dignity at Work: Anti-bullying, harassment and victimisation procedure**.

Allegations of potential breaches of this policy will be treated seriously. Employees, learners, volunteers and contractors who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy, which are found to have been made in bad faith, will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

8.2 What will happen if you act in a discriminatory way?

If, after investigation, we decide that you have acted in breach of this policy, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This applies to all individuals to whom this policy applies.