



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Document Name	Unique Id	Version	Effective Date	Review Date	Summary of changes
Equal Opportunities Policy	EOP	1	September 2016	November 2017	Updated and approved by Lynn Palfrey
Equal Opportunities Policy	EOP	2	October 2017	October 2018	Updated to reflect changes suggested by BCF Approved by LD
Equal Opportunities Policy	EOP	2	October 2018	October 2019	Reviewed by TE no changes
Equal Opportunities Policy	EOP	3	May 2019	May 2020	Updated after legal input by HC solicitors
Equal, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	EDI	4	August 2020	August 2021	Updated to reflect Diversity and Inclusion
Equal, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	EDI	4	August 2021	August 2022	No Changes
Equal, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	EDI	4	June 2024	June 2025	Updated

Version	Author	Owner	Reviewer	Review Date
4.0	Shaun Polley	Chin	Davies	June 2025

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Purpose and Scope

Me2 Club is committed to encouraging and championing equality, diversity and inclusion among our staff and volunteers and eliminating unlawful discrimination. It is our aim that our staff and volunteers are representative and reflective of our community and beneficiaries. It aims to ensure that everyone associated with the charity – children, families, staff, volunteers and partners are treated with respect, dignity, and that diversity is valued.

This policy applies to all aspects of our work, including governance, service provision, employment, volunteering and partnerships.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time as well as those who volunteer their time for us
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender-identity and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, furlough, leave for parents or caring responsibilities, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

We are committed to the following principles:

Respect and Dignity: Treating all individuals with respect and dignity.

Valuing Diversity: Recognising, valuing, and celebrating individual differences and contributions.

Equal Opportunities: Providing equal opportunities for all in recruitment, training, and development.

Accessible Services: Ensuring our services are accessible to all children with disabilities and additional needs and their families. Services will be designed and delivered to meet the diverse needs of children with disabilities and additional needs and their families.

Inclusive Practices: Developing inclusive practices in all areas of our work. We will engage with service users to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination or harassment against other people is prohibited and this applies in the workplace, and outside the workplace (when dealing with work-related contacts).

The following are some forms of discrimination and harassment that exist:

- a) Direct Discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views.
- b) Indirect Discrimination: a provision, criterion or practise that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect woman because they generally have a greater childcare commitment than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- c) Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- d) Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

- e) Bias: is a prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences. There are two types of biases:
- a. **Conscious bias** (also known as **explicit bias**) and
 - b. Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias)

It is important to note that biases, conscious or unconscious, are not limited to ethnicity and race. Though racial bias and discrimination are well documented, biases may exist toward any social group. Protected Characteristics are subject to bias.

Me2 Club strives to take positive action to challenge discrimination in all of its forms, including unconscious bias, preventing harassment and ensuring equality of opportunity for all. Where Me2 Club fails in its responsibility to support individuals fairly or unlawfully discriminates against an employee and the situation is not able to be resolved informally, the employee is able to raise a grievance under the grievance policy. Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Any breach of this policy will be dealt with seriously and where appropriate may be resolved in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure.

As an organisation that provides services and support, we are also committed against the unlawful discrimination and exclusion of our beneficiaries. Me2 Club will promote positive images of families and volunteers. Complaints against Me2 Club, its staff, volunteers and Trustees will be dealt with fairly and in accordance with the Me2 Club Complaints Policy.

Recruitment and Employment

It is our policy that all employment decisions are based on merit and the legitimate business needs of Me2 Club. A fair system is in place for recruitment of employees; this includes an application form, DBS checks, references and interviews. This system will be carried out for all employees regardless of their background or previous experience.

Our commitment to equal opportunities extends to all aspects of the working relationship including:

- Recruitment and selection procedures
- Terms of employment, including pay, conditions and benefits
- Training, appraisals, and professional development
- Work practices, conduct issues, allocation of tasks, discipline and grievances
- Termination of employment and matters after termination including references

If you consider yourself to be disabled or have an additional need, we encourage you to tell your Line Manager about your condition so that your Line Manager can consider any reasonable adjustments or support you may need.

This is a Statement of Policy only and does not form part of any contract of employment. This Policy may be amended at any time by the employer, in its absolute discretion.

Volunteers

A fair system is in place for recruitment of volunteers; this includes an application form, DBS checks, references and interviews. Me2 Club volunteers receive training on the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Me2 Club services may be restricted by the number of volunteers available and the number of families wishing to access the service.

Me2 Club monitors the ethnicity of volunteers and children.

Implementation

- Training: All staff and volunteers will receive training on EDI.
- Communication: This policy will be accessible on our website.
- Reporting: Any incidents of discrimination or exclusion will be reported to Chief Executive and addressed promptly.
- Review: We will regularly monitor and evaluate our EDI practices and their impact on an annual basis. We will seek feedback from stakeholders to continuously improve our approach.

Responsibilities

Achieving an equal opportunities workplace is a collective task shared between the Committee and the staff. The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for this Policy and for equal opportunities and discrimination law compliance in the workplace. The Chief Executive Officer has been appointed as the person with day-to-day operational responsibility.

Me Club are dedicated to ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. By promoting these values, we aim to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all children with disabilities and additional needs and their families.