

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy - Glossary

A

Accessibility: Where information, activities, and physical or digital environments are made as easy as possible to use, access, and understand for as many people as possible.

Age and Ageism: Age is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their age.

Ageism can be defined as attitudes, actions, and institutional structures, which discriminate against or treat someone less favourably due to their age.

Anti-Semitism: The council has adopted The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRC) definition of Anti-Semitism - Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

B

Belief: see Religion and belief

Bisexual or Bi: refers to a man or a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of both sexes.

Bi-cultural: Bicultural identity refers to a where a person regards themselves as having two cultures. For example, British Indian.

Bias: Inclination or prejudice (sometimes unconscious) for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Black: A broad term for all people with ethnic origins in the African continent.

Black Lives Matter: A social movement originating among African Americans, emphasizing basic human rights and racial equality for Black people and campaigning against various forms of racism. Abbreviations: BLM, B.L.M.

BME or BAME: An acronym that stands for Black [and Asian] & Minority Ethnic.

Though accepted by many, as with people of colour (see below), others consider these terms to be overly broad or simplistic and feel that they fail to take into account the ways in which the experiences of various minority ethnic groups differ from one another.

C

Civil Partnership: Legal recognition of a couple's relationship. Along with Marriage, Civil Partnership is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that it is generally unlawful to discriminate against a person based on them being part of a Civil Partnership.

D

Direct discrimination: This refers to less favourable treatment because of a person's protected characteristic.

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day

activities. Disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, so it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of disability.

Diversity: Diversity is recognising and valuing that individuals are unique, with each having their own values, beliefs, attitude, culture, racial background, sexuality, skills and life experience.

E

Engagement: The range of ways in which we (or another public authority) interact with our residents, other service users, and employees.

Equality: Equality refers to a situation where everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities, resources, and services as others. Equal opportunities require equitable provisions. (See: Equity)

Equality analysis/Equality Impact Assessment: Equality analysis involves looking at policies, strategies, actions, and decisions to consider how they may impact positively or negatively on equality or on those who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. It may also refer to looking at information related to service use, service users, or employees in order to analyse an organisation's engagement with certain groups of people. At North Herts, an Equality Impact Assessment refers to a fuller analysis which must be undertaken if the initial equality analysis highlights potentially significant impacts.

Equality information: The information that an organisation has (or will collect) about people with protected characteristics in order to help show compliance with the equality duty. This will include the findings of engagement with protected groups and others, and the effect of policies on protected groups. It may include both qualitative and quantitative information, as well as evidence of analysis that has been undertaken.

Equality objectives: A requirement to prepare, set and publish objectives is one of the specific duties set out under the equality duty. An authority's objectives should aim to further one or more aims of the equality duty.

Equality outcome: The results that individuals or groups actually achieve and are able to benefit from. For example, equal pay between men and women.

Equity: Equity refers to a situation where varying levels of support and assistance are provided, depending on specific needs and abilities. Equity requires eliminating barriers which may prevent individuals accessing equal opportunities, and as such individual needs may therefore be met in different ways.

For example: North Herts' Assisted Bin Collection Service is an additional service offered to those who, due to physical disability or mobility issues, cannot physically move or lift their bin containers to the kerbside. Whilst this additional service is not equally available to all residents, it creates **equity** by ensuring that an equal *outcome* is available to all residents. In this example the equal outcome is that everyone can have their rubbish collected on their designated bin collection day.

F

Fostering good relations: The Equality Act 2010 states that having due regard to the need to foster good relations involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

G

Gender identity: Someone's personal sense of their own gender. While sex is typically defined by someone's biological and physiological attributes, gender is considered by some to be a social construction around roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities. Many people consider their sex and gender identity to be the same or in alignment with each other, while others find that their sense of their own gender is incongruent with the sex they were considered to be at the point of their birth. People with this experience may consider themselves to be transgender and may go through a process of gender reassignment.

Some individuals identify as non-binary, meaning they consider their gender identity to fall somewhere outside of the woman/man binary. Some consider gender to exist on a spectrum, meaning there could be many different gender identities with which a person could identify. Others do not identify as having a gender at all – these people may be described as agender.

Gender reassignment: The process (typically involving a combination of surgical procedures and hormone treatment) undertaken by a transgender person in order to alter their physical sexual characteristics to match their gender identity

See also trans, transgender.

General Equality Duty: The Equality Act (2010) places a general duty on all public sector organisations to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

H

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may also involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or be related to gender reassignment or sex.

I

Inclusion: Inclusion is the practice of providing access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. As well as improving accessibility, it is about creating a welcoming and supportive environment where you value and involve everyone.

Indirect discrimination: This is when a provision, criterion, or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic, and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

For example: If staff at a workplace have to climb a flight of stairs to reach the toilet, and there are no lift facilities, this would indirectly discriminate against staff members who are unable to climb the stairs due to a physical disability or other mobility issues.

L

LGBTQ+: This is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

M

Marriage: a formal union, and social and legal contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically, and emotionally. Like Civil Partnership, it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone based on them being married.

Maternity: The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

Mitigation: This refers to measures which are put in place to reduce the negative impacts of a policy or decision. For example, a decision to move a council service (e.g paying for your garden waste collection) online may have negative effects on anyone who does not have a computer or internet. As such, mitigation may be to retain a method of using or purchasing the service via telephone or post.

N

Neurodiverse or Neurodivergent: Where someone's brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered 'typical'. Examples include autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, and tourettes.

P

Pregnancy: The condition of being pregnant. Alongside Maternity, it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of them being pregnant.

Protected characteristics: The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine characteristics as 'protected characteristics'. These are the characteristics where evidence shows there is still significant discrimination in employment, provision of goods and services, and access to services such as education and health. Under the Equality Act, the protected characteristics are personal characteristics which are protected by discrimination law. The protected characteristics are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

Protected groups: see Protected characteristics above

Public authority: This generally refers to anyone performing a public function e.g local government. The General Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 applies to public authorities. For this purpose, a public authority is a body that is named (listed) or described in Schedule 19 of the Equality Act. It also applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This includes private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority.

Public functions: The Equality Act 2010 defines a public function as a function that is of a public nature for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998.

R

Race: This refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. It is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their race.

Reasonable adjustment: Adjustments that public authorities make to the way they work or carry out functions to ensure that those with disabilities (which could include physical or mental conditions, as well as neurodivergence) are not disadvantaged. The adjustment could be made with regards to policies, practices, premises, or provision of equipment – for example, providing a special keyboard to someone with arthritis, or installing a ramp for someone who uses a wheelchair. Employers must make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act.

Religion or Belief: This refers to any religion, while belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). For a belief to be included, it should be genuinely held, apply to an important aspect of life, and must not affect other people's fundamental rights. Generally, a belief of such nature would affect your life choices or the way you live. Religion or Belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their religion, beliefs, or lack thereof.

Seldom Heard: The term 'seldom-heard groups' refers to under-represented people who use or might potentially use services and who are less likely to be heard by these service professionals and decision-makers. These groups used to be described as hard to reach – suggesting that there is something that prevents their engagement with services. Seldom heard emphasises the responsibility of agencies to reach out to excluded people, ensuring that they have access to services and that their voices can be heard, and is the preferred term for those reasons.

Examples of seldom heard groups could include:

- Particular ethnic minority groups
- Carers
- People with disabilities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- People who are homeless
- Younger people
- Older people
- People with language barriers

These people may have particular needs when it comes to participating.

Sex: Sex refers to the physical differences between people who are male, female, or intersex. It is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their sex, though there are some exceptions made to allow for the provision of single-sex services.

Sexual orientation: Sexuality orientation or sexuality is about the sex or gender that a person tends to feel attracted to emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually. A person may be

attracted only to people of the opposite sex, only to people of the same sex, or to people of all sexes or genders. Equally, a person may experience their sexual orientation as fluid, while others may experience little or no sexual attraction at all – this is known as asexuality. Asexual people may, however, experience emotional and romantic attraction.

Specific duties: Certain public authorities named or described (listed) in Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2011 are required to comply with certain specific duties. These duties are intended to assist authorities in complying with the General Equality Duty.

Stakeholders: People or groups who have an interest in a subject or an issue, or who are likely to be affected by any decision relating to it, and/or have responsibilities relating to it.

T

Transgender or Trans: Transgender people or trans people have a gender identity or expression that differs from the sex that they were considered to be at the point of their birth. Transgender people may change their name and identity, and may or may not seek to undergo gender reassignment (including hormone treatment and/or surgery) in order to bring their physical appearance into closer alignment with their gender identity. Some people who undergo such reassignment may consider themselves to be transsexual. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on this basis. Under the Act, gender reassignment is a personal process rather than a medical one and it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

V

Victimisation: If someone is treated badly because they complain about discrimination or help someone who has been discriminated against, this is called victimisation. Victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.