



Unleash the Creative Spirit of Young People

Music Relief Foundation

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this policy.

Organisation	MRF
Scope of policy	Applies to all staff and volunteers and all services, activities, training and general running of the organisation.
Policy operational date	01/03/2018
Policy prepared by	Olga Shaumyan (Administrator)
Reviewed/Amended	01/03/2020
Review date	01/03/2022 (every 2 years or sooner if required)
Distributing	This policy will be available on the MRF website and staff shared drive. It will be a requirement for all trustees and staff to read the policy after appointment or after its review. A summary of all relevant policies will be included in the volunteer handbook with clear signposting to the full text. Volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes that might affect their role.

Statement of intent

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Music Relief Foundation (MRF) strongly believes that equality, diversity and inclusion benefit not only the individual but the whole organisation. MRF is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in all its activities, services and practice. We will strive to eliminate whatever discrimination there exists in society (whether or not proscribed by law) because we believe that discrimination prevents people, young and older, from fully realising their potential and talents they have to offer.

MRF will treat all its staff, employees, volunteers and service users equally and as individuals. MRF, willingly and in compliance with the current legislation, will not tolerate discrimination based on race, colour, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic or national origin, disability, partnership status or home responsibility, HIV/AIDS status, political or religious belief, trade union activity, socio-economic background, refugee or asylum seeker status.

As a provider of services to the community, MRF accepts the responsibility of promoting equal opportunities and positively challenging discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is based on the Equality Act 2010 (see Appendix).

Accordingly, MRF recognises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- MRF believes that no young person should be excluded from the MRF activities on the grounds of age, gender, health, sexuality, class, family status, means, ability, colour, ethnic origin, culture, religion, or belief. Our aim is to be as inclusive as possible and we will continually look at ways of removing barriers.
- MRF will aim to ensure that all who wish to work in, or volunteer with us should have an equal chance to do so. MRF will appoint the best person for each job and will treat fairly all applicants. No applicant will be rejected on grounds that contravene the MRF Equality Policy. Commitment to implementing this policy will form part of the MRF job descriptions, paid or unpaid.
- MRF will strive to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practices through which it carries out its work. This is reflected in the development of greater diversity in the management, partner networks and membership, to ensure a genuinely diverse representation.

MRF is committed to developing an organisation in which all service users, workers and visitors enjoy equal rights. Measures to promote these rights are designed to ensure that no group is systematically denied them. Sometimes the different rights and needs of different groups will appear to conflict. Reconciling these apparent differences is an important part of the equal opportunity policy and practice.

Implementation

In implementing this policy the MRF will take account of the appropriate legislation to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

- We value the diversity of the communities we serve and seek to support all of them. We acknowledge the importance of reflecting this diversity in our organisation at all levels.

- We recognise that every worker can influence how equality is achieved, both in the group/projects and through the activities/service we provide. We will ensure that all workers are aware of their rights and responsibilities in this respect.
- We recognise the importance of effective communication. We will endeavour to provide a comprehensive range of information, including direct information about the group/project for young people and the community, in a variety of appropriate forms.
- We will also consult and listen to the views of the local young people and members of the community.

MRF recognises that prejudice exists at large and that some users and deliverers of its services may occasionally act out their frustration in a way incompatible with our Equality Policy. MRF will always challenge such behaviour. In the first instance, we will adopt a gentle approach with the aim of altering attitudes and behaviour whilst maintaining support for the distressed person.

GOVERNANCE

MRF will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

The MRF management has the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Those in charge of recruiting staff and volunteers to work on MRF projects are responsible for ensuring that the recruits are made aware of this and adhere to it while working with MRF. Further, all volunteers and service users have a duty, as part of their involvement with MRF, to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

MRF will never partner with any organisation that does not share our stance on equality of opportunity.

GOOD PRACTICE

WE DO:

- Create a positive and nurturing environment where young people and youth workers meet together.
- Respect other people's life experiences.
- Value each person for her or his uniqueness regardless of age.
- Focus on people's ability rather than disability.
- Take the opportunity to experience or explore other people's culture.
- Design our programmes to plan for opportunities to enable young people to explore non-stereotypical activities.

- Consider our own prejudices as such.
- Accept other people's personal choices and are prepared to challenge oppressive behaviour and language.

WE DON'T:

- Allow racist comments or jokes by workers or young people to go unchallenged.
- Ignore complaints or warning signs of discrimination on the assumption that the matter is trivial.
- Ignore abuse of power on the basis of age: more years don't necessarily mean more wisdom.
- Think about disability as just an issue about physical access.
- Display only posters and other material which reinforce stereotypical role models.
- Stereotype or make assumptions about young people's sexuality.

DISABLED ACCESS

MRF will endeavour, as far as is practicable, to ensure that all of the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

We will never turn down a service user, volunteer or staff member on the grounds of disability. If we are unable to achieve access, the person will be told why in a sensitive and dignified way.

USE OF LANGUAGE

All participants (staff, volunteers and service users) should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone.

Where the language used has a negative personal impact on others, and where it has been made clear to the person concerned that the use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

All materials used or developed by MRF will be evaluated in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

No volunteer, staff member or service user should be subjected to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including verbal sexual abuse, physical contact, repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive etc.

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome, yet they persist with it, then the initial complaint will be escalated to a formal complaint, potentially leading to a disciplinary action.

COMPLAINTS

Discriminatory behaviour or remarks are unacceptable within MRF. The response will aim to be sensitive to the feelings of the victim(s) and to help those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices.

MRF is committed to learning and changing to ensure this policy is upheld. Any person who feels that this policy has not been upheld is entitled to make a complaint via our complaints procedure and in line with our anti-bullying and whistle-blowing procedures. MRF will support people who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, and will not victimise or treat them less well because they have raised this.

All complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

Unfounded allegations, whether mistaken or malicious, will also be treated as serious.

VIOLATION OF EQUALITY POLICY

Breaches of the MRF Equality Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

An allegation of a breach will be investigated and a verbal warning issued if appropriate, followed by a disciplinary meeting. If behaviour is not corrected, this will lead to dismissal. Serious breach by a trustee will be dealt with through a report to the board by the Chair or the Chief Executive as appropriate.

Our decision can be challenged by either by applying to the MRF Board or through other appropriate channels (see Managing Complaints about the MRF, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure etc., all available on the MRF website or from the MRF office).

MONITORING AND REVIEW

MRF management represents the community and users which it serves and will be responsible for ensuring that our Equality Policy is properly implemented, monitored and reviewed to ensure that the latest guidelines are known and adhered to. MRF will monitor that equal opportunities is reflected in the practices of its staff, volunteers and partner organizations; the composition of the MRF committees and workforce; and in the provision of services.

Members of the management will periodically undertake equal opportunities training to keep apprised of the evolving best practice.

MRF will formally review this policy every 2 years.

REVIEW LOG

Date	Name	Signature
01/03/2020	Olga Shaumyan	OS
01/04/2021	Olga Shaumyan	OS

Appendix: Your rights under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The information below is to help you understand if you have been treated unlawfully.

WHO IS PROTECTED BY THE EQUALITY ACT?

Everyone in Britain is protected. This is because the Equality Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have. Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

There are some important differences depending on which protected characteristic you

have.

SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU ARE PROTECTED FROM DISCRIMINATION

Under the Equality Act you are protected from discrimination:

- when you are in the workplace
- when you use public services like healthcare (for example, visiting your doctor or local hospital) or education (for example, at your school or college)
- when you use businesses and other organisations that provide services and goods (like shops, restaurants, and cinemas)
- when you use transport
- when you join a club or association (for example, your local tennis club)
- when you have contact with public bodies like your local council or government departments

HOW CAN YOU BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST?

There are four main types of discrimination.

Direct discrimination

This means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people's memories get worse as they get older and so doesn't tell one of his older employees about it, because he/she thinks the employee wouldn't be able to do the job.

Indirect discrimination

This can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example a local authority is planning to redevelop some of its housing. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the female residents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of childcare responsibilities.

Harassment

This means people cannot treat you in a way that violates your dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. For example a man with Down's syndrome is visiting a pub with friends. The bar staff make derogatory and offensive comments about him, which upset and offend him.

Victimisation

This means people cannot treat you unfairly if you are taking action under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination), or if you are supporting someone else who is doing so. For example, an employee makes a complaint of sexual harassment at

work and is dismissed as a consequence.

WHAT ELSE DOES THE EQUALITY ACT DO?

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act also requires public bodies (like local councils, hospitals, and publicly-funded service providers) to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics. The public body also should have evidence to show how it has done this. For example, a local authority wants to improve its local bus service. It carries out a survey of people who use public transport and finds that very few women use buses at night because they are worried about sexual harassment. The local authority decides to work with the police and the transport provider, as well as local residents, to find ways to address this problem and make the bus service more inclusive.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can visit the Citizens Advice (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>) website for general information.

If you are concerned about your treatment at work, you can visit ACAS (<http://www.acas.org.uk/>) for more information.

If you are in a union, your union representative should also be able to help you with discrimination advice.

If you think you might have been treated unfairly and want further advice, you can contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com). Phone: 0808 800 0082 (9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat).

Or visit <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance>.