

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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BACKGROUND

Relate is committed to creating and sustaining a working environment free from hostility and discrimination in which all individuals are valued for their contribution and can develop to their full potential. We recognise that our success must be underpinned by the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion where every voice matters. Our organisation should reflect the diversity of our clients and the communities we support.

We will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour in the workplace which is contrary to and undermines the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. This may typically involve bullying or derogatory statements, unwanted spoken or physical advances and treatment of individuals which is unfair and interferes with the employee's performance, undermines job security, or creates an intimidating work environment.

PURPOSE

This policy is central to achieving Relates vision which is:

Thriving relationships in every part of life.

Relate expects everyone to work together professionally, in a manner which recognises everyone's right to dignity at work. The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework to support expected behaviours and to set clear standards for performance at work.

Bullying or harassment in the workplace will not be tolerated, to support this the Harassment, Discrimination, Victimisation and Bullying policy has been developed to specifically address equity issues.

1 EQUITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Relate opposes and will not tolerate any form of discrimination particularly associated with the protected characteristics set out in UK equality legislation.

The principles of equity, diversity and inclusion apply to all our staff and no one should be treated less favourably because of:

- Age
- Disability. This includes people who are disabled, have an impairment, condition or access need. At Relate we want our disabled colleagues, Trustees and members to succeed and develop in their roles without any barriers and commit to reasonable adjustments to promote equity
- Trans and non-binary identity. The Equality Act 2010 refers to "gender reassignment". This is a personal process rather than a medical one

- Marital and civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity status. This includes people who are pregnant, breastfeeding or have recently given birth
- Race. By race we mean colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins
- Religion or belief (including no religion or belief). Any expression of religious or philosophical beliefs must be in line with Relate's policies and values
- Sexual orientation
- Sex or gender
- Socio-economic status or class
- Caring responsibilities. This includes caring for a disabled person, older person or children, including foster children
- Menopause and periods. This includes those who are experiencing menopause, perimenopause or periods
- Parental leave. This includes any form of parent leave such as adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave

2. Recognising discrimination

Nobody should be subject to discrimination which includes:

- **Direct discrimination**

The Equality Act states that you have suffered direct discrimination if you are treated differently and less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic.

- **Indirect discrimination**

Indirect discrimination is when there is a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way but has a detrimental effect on some people more than others.

- **Discrimination by perception**

Discrimination by perception is when a person is discriminated against because someone thinks they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not. For example, if you discriminate against someone because you think they are trans, then they will be protected even if they are not trans.

- **Discrimination by association**

Discrimination by association is when someone is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with a protected characteristic. For example, because a friend, partner, or parent has a protected characteristic.

- **Victimisation**

Victimisation is when someone treats you badly because you complain about discrimination or help someone who has been the victim of discrimination.

- **Disability discrimination**

Discrimination arising from disability is when you are treated unfairly because of something connected to your condition or impairment, rather than the condition or impairment itself.

Relate will always discuss reasonable adjustments with our staff. These are changes an employer makes to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- making changes to the workplace
- changing someone's working arrangements
- finding a different way to do something
- providing equipment, services or support

• **Microaggressions**

A microaggression is a subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a member of a marginalised group. They can be intentional or unintentional.

For example, asking a Black, Asian or minority ethnic person “where are you really from?” or referring to a wheelchair user as “confined to a wheelchair”.

The Equality Act recognises you might be worried about complaining. So, you have extra legal protection when you complain about discrimination.

We are committed to working with our workforce, and with our clients, to develop and deliver high quality services that meet the needs of everyone.

3. Our commitments

When we make plans and policies we will: -

- Design, extend, promote and make accessible our services to meet the diverse needs of our clients
- Ensure that our policies, systems, processes and ways of working actively embrace the principles of equity, diversion and inclusion
- Make sure all staff, customers, contractors and community groups are aware of and operate in line with the principles of our equity policy

4 When we work in partnership we will:

- Publicise this policy widely and positively in our discussion with actual and potential partners
- Ensure that diversity is central to our discussions when we make decisions and develop services through partnerships

5 When we deliver services we will:

- Ensure all staff and service are aware that being LGBT+, in itself, is not a safeguarding issue and this information can be held confidentially.

- Ensure that our services are relevant and respond to the diverse needs of our clients
- Provide information about services that is clear, accurate and accessible to all
- Treat all customers positively and without discrimination as defined in this policy
- Respond seriously to, and investigate promptly and thoroughly any complaint of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation;

6 As an employer we will:

- Promote ourselves as a fully inclusive employer
- Recruit, retain and develop a workforce that reflects diversity and actively promotes diversity as set out in this policy statement
- Welcome the knowledge and skills that a diverse workforce contributes to the success of Relate
- Commit to operating a clear and transparent pay framework which evaluates jobs based on equal pay for work of equal value
- Engage fully with our staff to provide opportunities to influence the future of Relate and our ways of working
- Collect data, provide insight on and actively manage and promote equity and diversity in Relate's workforce

7 How we will make sure this happens:

- The Executive Leadership Team will promote Relate's commitment to equity and ensure adequate resources are made available
- Executive Leadership Team will be responsible for the overall management and direction of our equity commitments
- Managers will make sure equity and diversity issues are core to service delivery and staff management.
- The reception and administrative team will be responsible for the following procedure regarding client's pronouns and chosen name on Penelope.
 - If a client expresses different pronouns or chosen name to what was stated on a referral form or initially given on a referral or when booking in. The member of staff will enquire whether others (partners/family members or parents in the case of children and young people) are aware of the client's chosen pronouns and/or name and whether the client wants to be referred to by said pronouns or chosen name outside of the session by staff members.
 - This must then be documented at the top of the client's Penelope profile in red. This will include the chosen pronouns and/or name and whether others (partners/family members or parents in the case of children and young people) are aware.

8 Breaches of Policy

- If an individual witnesses or experiences any breach of these policies, a Discrimination/Harassment complaint form must be completed and submitted to the branch CEO and supervisor, unless the grievance is against or includes either of these individuals. This form will be included in an employee's starter paperwork or can be obtained from the operations manager.
- We take any breach of this policy very seriously. Some breaches may break the law. We will take prompt and appropriate action to manage and address breaches once identified. If proven, appropriate action may include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Relate's disciplinary policy will be followed for every breach of policy

Relate will ensure that all employees are aware of this policy and, thus, actively promote equity and feel able and challenge all forms of discrimination.

Version Control

Date	Version	Description	By Whom
01/04/24	1.0	Baseline version	Dale Cox – HR Director