

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all paid staff, trustees, volunteers, freelance staff, sessional workers, trainees, students or anyone working on behalf of Art Refuge (hereafter referred to as “staff”). It also applies to the way that Art Refuge collaborates and interacts with service users (directly or indirectly), other organisations, and the general public.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Art Refuge’s commitment to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality, demonstrating inclusion, and celebrating diversity amongst our workforce, service users and the wider public.

Context and evidence

Art Refuge’s mission to support the mental health and wellbeing of people displaced due to conflict, persecution and poverty has led us to work closely with and alongside some of the most marginalised members of society in the UK and internationally. In doing so, our experiences have mirrored the empirical evidence that:

- Equality and inclusion are crucial to the establishment of accessible and welcoming services. They are the fundamental building blocks of success for organisations whose core business is to support individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Discrimination and lack of equal opportunity pose a significant risk of harm to the well-being of the workforce and the individuals we serve.

Additionally, in light of ongoing racial violence around the world and the exacerbation of racism throughout global emergencies, we have developed an accompanying [Anti-Racism Statement](#) and recognise that discrimination and exclusion are often intersectional, shaped by factors such as race, gender, disability, class, immigration status, and faith.

Our legal responsibilities

In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will not unlawfully discriminate in the course of our duties on the grounds of any protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation). In addition to our legal responsibilities, we will not discriminate during the provision of services nor pose barriers to service access on the grounds of other socio-cultural characteristics (including but not limited to nationality, country of birth, place of origin, ethnicity, language, colour, socio-economic position, immigration status, trade union membership). We will take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in the design and delivery of our programmes and activities. Where lawful, we may also use positive action to address under-representation, for example by encouraging participation from under-represented groups.

3. OUR COMMITMENT

To our staff

1. Create environments in which the individual differences and contributions of our entire workforce are recognised and valued, and where individuals feel dignified, respected and able to give their best.
2. Embed equality in all management practices, including ensuring that talents and resources will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
3. Exemplify equality and fairness in our engagement procedures throughout the role advertisement, selection and promotion processes. We will select our workforce based on aptitude and ability. We will make reasonable adjustments in the recruitment process and during freelance engagement.
4. Work towards building a workforce that is representative of the diversity of the wider community.
5. Offer training, development and progression opportunities wherever possible to suit individual needs, and encourage and assist individuals to develop to their full potential.

To our service users

1. Create environments in which individuals feel safe, included, dignified, respected and empowered to express their individual differences.
2. Regularly monitor and adapt services to enable equal access for our target service user populations wherever possible.
3. Actively demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to the vulnerabilities of service users (e.g. legal status and health status).
4. Actively support service users to identify and address issues arising from discriminatory interactions with other service users that occur during Art Refuge activities, and manage such issues in line with the Safeguarding policy and procedures, ensuring safety, fairness and confidentiality.

5. Respect service users' privacy and confidentiality (further outlined in our [Data Protection Policy](#)).
6. Make reasonable adjustments to ensure our services and communications are accessible to people with disabilities or other needs.

To all individuals and organisations with whom we work

1. Not accept any form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment.
2. Log all incidents related to discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment. All reports will be investigated fairly and confidentially, and appropriate action will be taken to prevent further incidents.
3. Provide reasonable adjustments for those who require them to overcome various forms of disadvantage.
4. Ensure any actions undertaken by staff pertaining to safeguarding children and adults at risk are conducted in a fair and equitable. Please see the [Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#).
5. Address all breaches of this policy as misconduct and escalate such concerns to the CEO and Board of Trustees.

To the general public

1. Champion equality and diversity through our actions, our partnerships and the dissemination of our work and our views through a variety of platforms.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Board of Trustees will review equality and diversity matters at least annually. Any equality monitoring data that relates to protected characteristics will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and Art Refuge's Data Protection Policy. Special category data will only be processed with a lawful basis, stored securely and anonymised where possible.

This policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees and the CEO of Art Refuge. It will be disseminated to all staff. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Actions under this policy will be proportionate to the size and resources of Art Refuge.