

Policy Statement: *Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion SAYS is committed to encouraging and promoting diversity and inclusion in our workplace and services to members. This reflects our values of respect, belief, care and integrity, where everyone should be treated with dignity at all time. SAYS will take every possible step to tackle all forms of discrimination, inequality, and unfair treatment, whether it's intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect. SAYS is committed to making sure that all employees have equal access to opportunities and to removing all barriers to inclusion in the workplace.*

1. Purpose and Aims of the Policy

To set out SAYS clear commitment to creating a diverse, inclusive workplace and becoming a best practice employer, going beyond legal requirements on equality, diversity and inclusion

- To provide the legal framework and definitions surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion; the protected characteristics; and forms of discrimination
- To provide clear guidance for staff on expected behaviours and responsibilities as employees of a diverse and inclusive workplace
- To set out a fair and inclusive approach to the recruitment, selection, and professional development of employees
- To make sure that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in all of the organisation's practices and processes
- To explain the possible effects of any breach of the policy all employees, consultants, and agency workers who work on behalf of SAYS are expected to follow the principles of this policy.

Equality

Equality is about making sure that every individual has equal opportunities to make the most of their lives, whatever their identity or background. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way; it recognises that creating equal opportunities and outcomes for everyone may require different approaches for different individuals or groups.

Diversity

Diversity means valuing all differences between people, whether they are visible or not. It includes recognising employees' different viewpoints, experiences, and identities as organisational strengths. Diversity is not about 'accepting' or 'managing' differences; it is about nurturing and celebrating them so all staff can contribute fully and realise their full potential.

Inclusion

Inclusion means taking proactive, positive actions to remove all barriers to participation in the workplace to create an environment where every employee feels equally valued and supported to thrive. Being an inclusive organisation requires an ongoing commitment to listening, understanding, and taking action.

2. Legal Framework

Current equality legislation and associated codes of practice to be taken into account include (but are not limited to):

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Part-Time Workers Regulations 2000
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).
- Gender Recognition Act 2004

This legislation protects people against all forms of discrimination based on particular protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are certain attributes that people possess, which the law considers must be safeguarded.

There are nine protected characteristics that it is unlawful to discriminate based on: sex, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, and gender reassignment.

See Appendix A for legal definitions of these terms. SAYS commitment and approach to inclusion goes beyond the legal characteristics listed here. We will take steps to make sure everyone feels included

3. Types of Discrimination

Direct discrimination

This is where a person is treated less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic is. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ someone because they were pregnant.

Discrimination by association

This is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic, for example, against people who are carers for disabled people.

Discrimination by perception

This is direct discrimination against someone because the other person thinks they possess a particular protected characteristic, for example, against a straight woman who is perceived to be gay.

Harassment

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy Feb 2022

This is unwanted conduct and violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Even if the effect wasn't intended by the person responsible for the conduct, it's still harassment. Employees can now report behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

Victimisation

This is where someone is treated less favourably than others because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance or have given evidence in relation to a complaint.

Bullying

This is behaviour that's offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse of power and is intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure. Bullying can include (but is not limited to) racist, sexist and homophobic language or abuse.

SAYS and its employees will do everything it can to make sure that people are treated fairly and equally across all protected characteristics and at all levels of the organisation by:

- Preventing, tackling, and addressing seriously all instances of discrimination and language that's inappropriate, offensive or insensitive
- Challenging assumptions and stereotypes across all protected characteristics
- Making sure those employees from diverse backgrounds have equal access to progression, promotion, reward, and recognition
- Supporting all employees to balance their life at work and at home
- Making workspaces accessible and co-developing effective reasonable adjustments with disabled employees and those with temporary health needs or conditions (for example, employees who are pregnant) so that all employees can reach their full potential
- Visibly promoting and championing the benefits of a diverse workforce
- Making sure that employees' contractual requirements and employee benefits don't disadvantage or exclude certain individuals or groups
- Valuing and respecting the different perspectives and viewpoints of all employees
- Focusing on employees' abilities and strengths and avoiding any assumptions about ability based on a person's identity or background

4. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and monitoring how this policy is put into effect.

The senior leadership team is responsible for championing this policy on behalf of the Board and leading their teams in a way that is consistent with the policy. They will also work to make

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy Feb 2022

sure that all staff who report to them understand what is needed to meet the requirements of this policy.

HR and diversity team members are responsible for developing, updating, communicating, and implementing this policy.

All staff members are expected to become familiar with this policy and make sure that their behaviour and practice reflect its ethos.

5. Actions

Staff who support and members of SAYS will

Fully adopt and embrace this policy's ethos of equality, diversity, and inclusion at all times

- Respect and value the diversity and diverse perspectives of others
- Not discriminate, bully, harass or victimise anyone
- Act as role models for equality, diversity, and inclusion. Where needed, explain this policy and what it means for other employees or volunteers
- Report all forms of discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation and challenge them where appropriate
- Attend training to make sure they are following best practice in equality, diversity, and inclusion in their work and workplace behaviours
- Assist SAYS in any related investigations and provide accurate, unbiased information

Line managers will

- Set a positive example for team members by making sure that their own actions and behaviours promote equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Follow best practice during recruitment to ensure shortlisting, selection, interview, and appointments processes do not discriminate
- Adopt any positive action policy set by SAYS
- Make sure that appraisal processes include equality, diversity and inclusion targets, learning and behaviours as appropriate
- Identify and proactively seek to address equality, diversity, and inclusion awareness or training needs for their teams and direct reports

A Member or staff who support in SAYS will

Create a culture where equality, diversity, and inclusion are valued and dignity and respect are promoted across the whole organisation; supported by tangible actions and guidance, training, and awareness raising for staff

- Take steps to prevent and challenge all forms of discrimination and inappropriate behaviour and language, using appropriate disciplinary channels where appropriate

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy Feb 2022

- Operate an open and fair recruitment and selection process that encourages applications from all areas of our diverse society, taking positive action as appropriate
- Make sure that selection for employment is solely on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- Make sure that professional development opportunities are open to all and apply positive action as appropriate
- Support managers to recognise and challenge unlawful practice and effectively deal with complaints of bullying and harassment
- Require contractors, external agencies, and service providers to follow this policy and link to procurement policies
- Deter discrimination by making it clear that it is unacceptable and that it will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence
- Investigate complaints of discrimination on any grounds in line with SAYS disciplinary procedure
- Regularly review relevant policies and procedures to make sure that they are in line with best practice and legal requirements on equality, diversity, and inclusion

6. Training and Support

All employees are required to attend equality, diversity, and inclusion training. If they need it, individuals and teams will be provided with further guidance and support to fulfil their role and responsibilities. Equality, diversity, and inclusion will be integral to recruitment and selection training.

7. Diversity Monitoring

Diversity monitoring is an essential process for SAYS. It means SAYS can identify patterns and highlight any areas of concern. Diversity information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes is kept confidential and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. SAYS will consider and take appropriate action to address any concerns identified as a result of the monitoring process. SAYS may use appropriate methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group.

8. Breach of Policy

All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated. If they're proven, they will result in appropriate action for the perpetrator. Any employee found to be in breach of this policy could be subject to disciplinary action and/or their continued engagement with SAYS will be questioned.

9. Review of Policy

SAYS will regularly review this policy to make sure that it is up to date and in line with the law and the development of SAYS' equality, diversity, and inclusion vision and strategy. Reviews will involve input from employees and staff diversity groups and networks.

10. Appendices:

Appendix A

Legal definitions of protected characteristics as defined in The Equality Act 2010. Please see SAYS inclusive language guidance on the intranet for more inclusive definitions and explanations (in process of being written at time of publication).

Age

A person belonging to a particular age (for example, 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example, 18 to 30 year olds).

Disability

A person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, adverse and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

Refers to a person who has undergone, intends to undergo or is currently undergoing a transition from the sex they were assigned at birth to their self-identified gender. This includes people who undergo medical treatment as well as people who take 'social' steps such as changing their name, pronoun or appearance to live as their self-identified gender. Please be aware that gender reassignment is a contentious term, not commonly used outside of The Equality Act.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is a legal union between two people of any sex or gender. Same-sex couples can also have relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.

Race

A person or group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic origins, which may be different to a person's current nationality.

Religion and belief

Refers to any religion and lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief, and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live to be included in the definition.

Sex

Assigned to a person at birth (male or female) on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions.

Sexual orientation

A person's sexual attraction or lack thereof, to other people of the same or different genders.