

Equality Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create and support an environment in which the differences and the contributions of all our staff and volunteers are recognised and valued.

It is our aim to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**) or any other reason/factor.

2. Scope

This policy and the associated procedures apply to all employees, temporary workers and contractors working on behalf of Active Luton.

3. Principles

1. Active Luton develops and delivers services that are inclusive, accessible and appropriate for the people we serve
2. All employees and volunteers are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
3. Training, development, and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
4. We aim to use good management practice to promote equality in the workplace.
5. We will regard breaches of our equality policy as misconduct that could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
6. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation.
7. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
8. Our staff, volunteers or contractors will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation or any other reason in the provision of Active Luton's services.
9. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.
10. The policy and our employment practices will be monitored and reviewed annually. Monitoring information and reviews may be jointly undertaken with the recognised trades unions.

4. Managers' Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Chief Executive. Managers will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination.

Each manager will ensure that:

1. All their staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy,
2. They use job related objective criteria when recruiting, making decisions about promotion, training and pay, and evaluating performance, as well as responding to flexible working requests, managing absence and attendance issues and requests for special and compassionate leave
3. Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly, and as quickly as possible;
4. Proper records are maintained.
5. They make reasonable adjustments to maintain the services of an employee or volunteer who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours.
6. They include all staff in training/development programmes;
7. They give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

Human Resources will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

5. Employees' Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to its successful operation of fair employment practices. All members of staff should:

1. Comply with the policy and arrangements;
2. Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
3. Not victimise, harass, or intimidate other staff, volunteers, customers, or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics, or for any other reason.
4. Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
5. Inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

6. Third parties

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee, volunteer or customer is harassed based on a protected characteristic by third parties such as contractors or customers. Where Active Luton is engaging contractors, the equality policy will be shared and explained prior to contracts being let. Active Luton will not tolerate such actions against its staff, volunteers, or customers and we will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again

7. Equality Training

A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes.

Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

8. Monitoring

We are committed to the monitoring and evaluation of equality data to measure the impact of procedures and practices in the workplace, and to put into place action plans where necessary.

9. Complaints, Grievances and Disciplinary sanctions

Job applicants who feel they have been unfairly treated in the selection process may raise a complaint under the Safer Recruitment Procedure.

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Grievance or Bullying and Harassment Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.