

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy

1. Aim & Introduction

Sycamore Trust U.K. is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for staff, volunteers, and trustees to be truly representative of all sections of society and those using our services, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation in providing a service is committed against unlawful discrimination of those using our services or the public.

2. Legislation

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation policy and guidance set out in The Equalities Act 2010 and Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

3. Scope of Policy

In this policy Sycamore Trust U.K. includes any employee whether full time, part time or on temporary employment to the organisation, who acts on behalf of the organisation.

This policy is also applicable to all volunteers and applies to all of the organisation's activities.

To read in conjunction with: -

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Equal Pay Policy
- Managing Absences and Return to Work Policy
- Menopause and the Workplace policy
- Remote working policy
- Safer recruitment Policy
- The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Office policy
- Training And Development policy

4. Statement of Policy

The terms Equality, Inclusion and Diversity are at the heart of this policy.

'Equality' is about equal opportunities and means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.

'Inclusion' refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included which means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution.

'Diversity' is about recognising, respecting and valuing differences in people and means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforces.

This policy's purpose is to provide equality, fairness, and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part time, full time or voluntary.

To not lawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of: -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

To oppose and avoid all forms of lawful discrimination. This includes in: -

- Pay and Benefits
- Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Dealing with Grievances and Discipline
- Dismissal
- Redundancy
- Leave for Parents
- Request for Flexible Working
- Selection for Employment, Promotion, Training, or other developmental opportunities.

5. Our Commitments

The organisation commits to: -

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- Create a working environment free for bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy. Responsibilities includes staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, preventing bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.
 - All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients, suppliers, and the public.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, clients, suppliers, visitors the public and any others in the course of the organisations work.

- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment related to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- Make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy.
 - Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

6. Recruitment, Selection and Appraisal

The recruitment and selection process are crucially important to any Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. Applications for posts shall be given as much clear and accurate information about posts through advertisements, job descriptions, and interviews in order to enable them to assess their own suitability for the post.

Recruitment literature shall not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants, unless there is a genuine occupational qualification which limits a post. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.

All applications shall be informed that Sycamore Trust UK encourages equal opportunities. All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.

All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

All personnel specifications for posts shall only include requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job, as requirements that are convenient, rather than necessary, may be discriminatory. Job descriptions will be revised to ensure that they reflect the scope of the job and job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.

The person specification provides the basis for objective criteria for selection of candidates for short listing. Every applicant will be assessed in terms of the person specification using a scoring system agreed by the interview panel. Clear tabulated records of scores awarded by the panel will be kept and why a candidate has not been short listed.

The panel will agree the closing, short listing and interview timetable before advertising the post so these dates can be incorporated into the advertisement. Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible and selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature. All interviews shall be thorough, conducted on an objective basis and shall deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job's requirements. No one will interview alone. The panel will consist of 3 members of the senior staff, which will include the line manager for the advertised post and such other people as the CEO feels necessary to achieve a suitable level of knowledge, expertise, and overall balance.

The panel will have regard to both the completed application form and to the performance of candidates in interview. The panel will be fully informed on the Equalities, Inclusion & Diversity Policy and will be briefed on the inadvisability of discriminatory and therefore not permissible questions.

The Chairperson of the panel, in consultation with panel members, will, at the conclusion of the interviews, complete an assessment based on the notes made by the individual panel members, of each applicant in areas relevant to the nature of the job description. All available information will be evaluated before a final decision is made.

Candidates may be requested to attend more than one interview for a post and may also be asked to complete a timed exam, dependent on the post applied for.

Job offers will normally be made subject to references. Sycamore Trust U.K. will honour any request to keep a reference confidential.

All staff shall have regular supervisions and yearly appraisals and encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs.

The **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975** applies due to the nature of our work, closely linked with children, you are obliged to give information about convictions. If you are found to have withheld information, you will be refused an interview and if offered employment, the offer will be withdrawn. If information comes to light after employment, you will risk immediate dismissal. Sycamore Trust U.K. undertakes to keep any information strictly confidential.

All key individuals involved in management, selection and dealing with the public shall be given training on equality, diversity and inclusion and safer recruitment.

7. Grievances

Particular care will be taken to deal effectively with any complaints of discrimination which should be pursued through the grievance procedure.

If you have a grievance relating to the implementation of this policy, you should complain in the first instance to the CEO of Sycamore Trust U.K. This grievance should be set out in writing and dated. The CEO will attempt to settle the grievance. If not resolved within 5 working days, the matter will be referred to Sycamore Trust U.K. Management Committee Disciplinary & Grievance panel for action under the grievance procedure. The decision of the panel will be final.

Approval of Policy

Signed:  (Chair) Date: 17 April 2025

For and on behalf of the Trustees of Sycamore Trust U.K.

Signed:  (CEO) Date: 17 April 2025

This policy will be reviewed in **April 2027** or if legislation should change whichever is sooner.