Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	Pg. 3
2.	Definitions	3
3.	Scope	3
4.	Responsibility	3
5.	Purpose	3
6.	Employer's Responsibilities	4
7.	Staff Responsibilities	4
8.	Recruitment and Selection	4
9.	Service Provision	5
10.	Employment	5
11.	Purchasing	6
12.	References	6
13.	Related Lifespace Policies	6

1 INTRODUCTION

Lifespace is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each employee/ volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best. Lifespace is also committed to preventing unlawful discrimination of the children and young people with whom we interact. We are committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination and will not tolerate less favourable treatment.

We are committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination and will not tolerate less favourable treatment. We will listen to children and young people, respect their individual needs and remove barriers so they feel valued, included and able to access our support.

Lifespace will keep this policy under regular review to ensure it remains aligned with current employment legislation, Equality and Human Rights commission (EHRC) guidance, the ACAS Code of Practice, and our duty to maintain a safe, fair and respectful working environment.

2 DEFINITIONS

- **Equality:** Ensuring everyone is treated fairly and has access to the same opportunities.
- **Equity:** Recognising that people have different needs and barriers and may need different support to achieve fair outcomes.
- **Diversity:** Recognising, respecting and valuing people's differences, backgrounds and experiences.
- **Inclusion:** Creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, valued and able to participate.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all within Lifespace including: paid and volunteer staff, trustees and partners.

4 RESPONSIBILITY

The Trustees and CEO have primary responsibility for ensuring equal opportunities in service delivery and employment practice. All employees, contractors and volunteers must adhere to this policy in the course of their work, monitor it on a day-today basis and report on its operation to the CEO as required. Everyone working with us has a responsibility to support Trustees and CEO to provide equal opportunities in employment, and to prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

5 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all those in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time and those volunteering with us.
2. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
3. Ensure no-one is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds below (the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010);

    - Age
    - Disability
    - Gender reassignment
    - Marriage and civil partnership
    - Pregnancy and maternity
    - Race
    - Religion or belief
    - Sex/gender or
    - Sexual orientation.

6 EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Lifespace will:

- Ensure that the policy is read and understood by all employees, contractors and volunteers, and provide updates and guidance relating to information contained within the policy through the use of handbooks, notice boards, team meetings, newsletters, written notification to individual employees, as well as other methods of communication as appropriate.
- Discuss and, where appropriate, agree with employee representatives any proposed changes in the policy's contents and implementation.
- Make the policy available to all job applicants and, where appropriate, to all users of our services.
- Ensure that disciplinary and grievance procedures incorporate principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- Regularly examine existing procedures and criteria, including recruitment practices, and terms and conditions of employment, and change them where they are actually or potentially discriminatory.
- Ensure that the organisation is kept up to date and within the law.
- Provide training and guidance to enable managers and employees to carry out the policy and provide specific training for relevant decision makers, including members of the Board of Trustees where appropriate.
- 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, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality and diversity policy.
- Monitor to assess how this policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them 3-yearly and take action to address any issues.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, contractors and job applicants, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- To treat fairly any complaints or concerns, raised by staff (paid or volunteer), young people or their families, commissioners, funders or other relevant parties. Staff should refer to the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy. All others should refer to the Complaints Policy.
- To recognise equity rather than equality, e.g., "a one-size-fits all" approach does not achieve fairness for everyone. We will be consistently fair but flexible and inclusive to support individual needs.

7 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff are expected to:

- Ensure that you are familiar with the contents of this policy and any future updates that are provided.
- Confirm that you have read and understand the contents of the policy and agree to work within the requirements set out in the policy.
- Attend and engage with training and development activities relating to equality, diversity and inclusion and the avoidance of unlawful discrimination.
- Speak to your line manager or a member of the core team immediately if you believe that you have witnessed discriminatory or unfavourable treatment towards a colleague, client or mentee.
- Be aware that you, as well as the organisation, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the course of your work, against colleagues, clients, mentees and the general public.

8 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

We will endeavour, through appropriate training, to ensure that employees making recruitment and selection decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

Role descriptions, where used, will be in line with this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Role requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.

We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.

All applicants who apply for roles with us will receive fair and equal treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the role.

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

Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the role and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

We will not disqualify any applicant because they are 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 role.

Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other managers, employees, contractors, volunteers, clients or Trustees.

9 SERVICE PROVISION

We will work actively towards ensuring that our services and resources are relevant to all clients and service users. We will examine each area of work to determine whether:

- The service is offered in an accessible and relevant way.
- Alternative methods would be more appropriate.
- Additional services should be developed.
- There are any practices/procedures which are discriminatory.

All written resources for groups and individuals produced by Lifespace will reflect the mixed community within which we work and stereotyped images of particular groups will not be reinforced. All employees, contractors and volunteers must ensure that their work reflects these principles.

Users of our services will have easy access to information about Lifespace's services, which may involve making materials available where appropriate and practicable in a variety of media, e.g. in large print or electronically.

We will use monitoring information to gain further understanding of how young people access our services, who we are reaching and who may be missing out, using this insight to identify and address barriers to access.

10 EMPLOYMENT

Lifespace opposes and avoids all forms of unlawful discrimination for all job applicants, employees, workers, contractors or volunteers, whether temporary, part-time or full-time. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Lifespace is committed to creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

We take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination from colleagues, partner agencies, clients, children, young people and other individuals that we engage with in the course of our work and activities. Such acts may be dealt with as misconduct under our disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action may be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

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 relates to a protected characteristic) is a criminal offence.

Lifespace recognises that recent legislative changes strengthen employer duties relating to sexual harassment and has applied these requirements within the relevant policies.

Our commitment includes training managers and all colleagues about their rights and responsibilities under the Equality and Diversity policy. Lifespace recognises that training is an important factor, and everyone will be supported and encouraged to develop to their full potential. Induction training is particularly important and will be made available to all those new to Lifespace and to those who receive promotion or who move into a different role. When other needs are identified, every effort will be made to ensure that training is provided.

Promotion and advancement will be made on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010) and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Lifespace recognises that from time-to-time family and social circumstances may change and consequently employees may need to change their conditions of work. We will attempt, where circumstances and resources permit, to accommodate the needs of employees. Should you wish to request a permanent or temporary change to the Terms and Conditions of your employment, please refer to the Flexible Working Policy.

11 PURCHASING

Lifespace will always aim to ensure that the services it offers are accessible to all groups. It will not knowingly receive or purchase goods and services from agencies which practise discrimination in any form.

12 REFERENCES

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Workers Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act
- The Employment Rights Act 2025
- The Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000

13 RELATED LIFESPACE POLICIES

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Harassment and Bullying policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Behaviour “Code of Conduct”
- Whistleblowing Policy

This Policy is communicated to all staff, trustees suppliers and sub-contractors. It will be published on our website and made available to interested parties.

Date of Issue: October 2026	Signed: Lisa Carroll CEO
	Signed: Becky Fernandes-Green Trustee (Environment and External Lead)
Date of Next Review:	October 2029
Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer