



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

MAY 2023

1. Statement of intent

1.1 Youth Connect South West is committed to equality of opportunity and believes that young people are a major strength which contributes to the social and economic prosperity of the area. YCSW is committed to working within the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that no service user, job applicant, employee or other person associated with the YCSW is treated inequitably or in an unlawful or unjustifiably discriminatory manner.

1.2 YCSW recognises that people from specific key groups may experience discrimination and less favourable treatment on the grounds of their protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sex
- Gender reassignment,
- Marriage/civil partnership,
- Pregnancy & maternity,
- Religion/belief • Sexual orientation.

We also recognise that people may experience discrimination and less favourable treatment for other reasons (e.g. on the grounds of their financial or economic status, unrelated criminal convictions, gender identity, homelessness or lack of a fixed address, political view, or trade union activity).

- 1.3 YCSW will take positive steps to stop any unfair/unlawful discrimination and carry out positive action where lawful. YCSW will also take proactive steps to pay 'due regard' to the need to enhance equality, tackle discrimination and help foster good community relations.
- 1.4 The leadership and day to day operation of this policy rests with the CEO and Operational Manager they must ensure that all employees, partners, and contractors, are aware of the policy and understand their role in its implementation.

3. Employment

The YCSW will ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

4. Employment commitments

- 4.1 Selection criteria and procedures will ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. YCSW will ensure that at least the chair of every selection or interview panel will be equipped and trained in fair selection procedures.
- 4.2 YCSW is committed to having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local community.

- 4.3 YCSW will monitor all stages of the recruitment and selection process. It will monitor representation within the workforce by department, pay, training, promotion, redeployment, redundancy, complaints, investigations, grievances, and disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.4 YCSW will strive to ensure that its employment policy, practices, and arrangements are flexible and will support, as far as is lawful, reasonable and practicable, specific needs and requirements of individuals and groups.
- 4.5 YCSW will work towards retaining employees who become disabled or those with progressive disability. The YCSW recognises that some disabled people may need assistance to attain or retain employment and is committed to providing 'reasonable adjustment' in employment.
- 4.6 YCSW is committed to consulting its staff on all employment matters and understands that the successful promotion of equality of opportunity involves the support and participation of staff, staff groups and Trade Unions.
- 4.7 YCSW will not discriminate against any employee on the grounds of his or her personal views or activities except where those views are opposed and/or detrimental to the principles and values of the YCSW.
- 4.8 YCSW is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all staff, and to taking action against all forms of discrimination and harassment. YCSW will not tolerate any harassment, whether physical or verbal, of employees by members of the public or colleagues. YCSW will

take prompt action on any employee grievance concerning discrimination, victimisation, or harassment. YCSW will provide an effective response to deal with perpetrators and provide support for complainants.

- 4.9 YCSW offers equalities training to all employees, and individual participation will be considered at each annual performance review.

5. Service delivery

- 5.1 YCSW is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible and seeks to ensure that current and potential service users do not experience barriers in accessing services.

- 5.2 YCSW will ensure that no service user is subjected to unjustifiable discrimination in the delivery of any of YCSW's services. In addition, it will promote equality, diversity, and social inclusion amongst our partners in the services they provide.

- 5.3 In order to achieve this, YCSW will ensure that equality issues are considered at the outset of all policy development and planning and become an integral part of the way that all services are delivered.

6. Service Delivery Commitments

- 6.1 YCSW will ensure that services are responsive to the changing and diverse needs of young people and the communities it operates within.

- 6.2 YCSW will ensure that service users are aware of their rights and entitlements when receiving services.
- 6.3 Services and facilities will be accessible with specific provision meeting individual needs where appropriate.
- 6.4 Reasonable adjustment will be made in the provision of services for disabled people and in relation to the physical features of our facilities to reduce physical barriers to services.
- 6.5 Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out across service areas where necessary, and action plans will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- 6.6 Complaints about services will be dealt with promptly and will be monitored against all equality areas covered by legislation.

7. Partnerships

- 7.1 YCSW will ensure that all terms of reference and other relevant partnership documentation complies with the YCSW's equality guidelines.

8. Responsibility for policy implementation and monitoring

- 8.1 YCSW Trustees and the Chief Executive will be responsible for oversight of the equalities policy and ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

8.2 Senior Managers, Managers and all employees with supervisory responsibility are responsible, within their area of responsibility, for implementing, monitoring, and promoting this policy.

8.4 Employees must not:

- Ignore incidents of discrimination,
- Unlawfully discriminate against anyone,
- Persuade, incite, or encourage another person to discriminate,
- Harass, victimise, or abuse other employees or members of the public for any reason,

10.5 Staff will not be expected to tolerate discrimination from service users, other employees, providers or any third party.

10.6 YCSW will inform all job applicants, employees and service users of this policy and ensure everyone understands their collective and individual responsibilities.