

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Data Sheet

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Aim

The Big Life group recognises that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to our success, and by investing in a diverse staff team this enables us to deliver better services and create more opportunities for the communities we work within.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy set's out The Big Life group's approach to creating a safe environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying, ensuring it is a place where everyone is valued and has an equal chance to succeed.

The policy's purpose is to provide equality, fairness and respect for all and to ensure that no-one is unlawfully discriminated against in line with the 9 protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010:

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

We aim to be a place that employees want to join, enjoy working in and are proud to contribute to. The Big Life group is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection, training and career progression for all staff and recognises the importance of maintaining an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve.

The Big Life group values different perspectives people bring and believes by harnessing them we can make a greater impact. We will endeavour to ensure that the organisation reflects the diversity of the communities in which we work.

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2. Scope

This policy covers all areas of the Big Life group's work including: recruitment, service delivery, volunteering, work placements, employees, staff terms and conditions, training, HR policies and procedures. Where it is found that employees have contravened the responsibilities as set out in the Equality policy, appropriate action may be taken under the Disciplinary Policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All parties are required to work within this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Specific responsibilities are below:

Management Responsibilities –

- To create and promote an inclusive and collaborative working environment
- To attend and complete relevant training to broaden awareness of and promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.
- To ensure all employees have an understanding of this policy and have completed training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- To ensure that services are designed and delivered to cater for the diverse needs of the communities in which we work
- To ensure fair and objective application of all employment and recruitment practices, so that selection is based on individual merit and that the staff recruited reflect the communities in which we work. They should ensure diversity monitoring procedures are in place and operated within their service and staff team.

Employee's Responsibilities:

- To understand and apply the principles set out in this policy at all times when working for the Big Life group
- To treat all colleagues, service users and any visitors to the group with dignity and respect
- To attend and complete relevant training to broaden awareness of and promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.
- To take appropriate action if there are breaches of this policy by reporting incidents to either management or via the Whistleblowing Policy (this is included in the intro does it need to be in again?)
- Executive Directors and Board – will ensure that the group's strategic direction responds to the diverse needs of the communities in which we work and that any operational plans take account of their impact on Equality and Diversity.

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4. Recruitment

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. The Big Life group aims to ensure that we positively encourage applications from groups in the community who are traditionally discriminated against. We will add this statement to all job adverts:

‘The Big Life group positively promotes diversity in the workforce’

We recognise the barriers to employment facing many of the people we work with. We will therefore offer a range of opportunities for people to volunteer or gain work experience within the group. We will enable volunteers and work placements to gain employment through offering internal recruitment opportunities whenever possible.

Where posts are advertised externally, consideration is given to the most appropriate outlets to ensure that a wide range of potentially suitable applicants have the opportunity to apply.

Selection methods, including interviews, are conducted in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and are designed to ensure that discrimination forms no part of recruitment processes. We will assess every person in their own right and will not automatically disbar anyone from employment due to a previous criminal conviction. The Disclosure Policy will enable staff to make informed decisions which safely maximise participation for people with convictions.

5. Staff Terms and Conditions

We will offer flexible and supportive work arrangements to enable people to maximise their contribution at work. We will ensure that our policies and procedures take account of the diversity of our workforce. We have a range of policies including:

- Family Friendly Policies
- Special Leave
- Flexible Working (for every employee after 26 weeks service)
- Wellbeing Policy

We will review all policies regularly to ensure that our working policies reflect best practice and meet legislative requirements.

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6. Staff Training

The Big Life group will provide training in equality and diversity to all employees to help staff understand their responsibilities and help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

The Big Life group offers a range of training and will ensure that access to training is fair and equitable for all staff. The appraisal process enables employees and managers to discuss career aspirations and training opportunities

7. Harassment

Where an employee considers that they have been unlawfully discriminated against or the complaint involves bullying or harassment, they may use the Big Life group's Grievance Policy.

The Big Life group will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that is received.

A person harasses another if they engage in unwanted conduct which devalues or intimidates others on basis of their difference. It is important to remember that it is not the intention of the harasser but how the recipient perceives their behaviour, which determines whether harassment has occurred. The Big Life group will not tolerate harassment from any person, including staff, volunteers, and third parties including clients, customers, contractors, partner organisations and suppliers. Any staff member who is found to be harassing another person on these grounds will face disciplinary action.

We will support staff to feel confident to challenge discrimination in all its forms. We will ensure that our workplaces prominently display our commitment to diversity and that discriminatory behaviour of any nature is not permitted.

8. Disciplinary

The Big Life group takes a serious view of any discrimination and breaches of this policy are deemed as misconduct. Any such actions will be investigated as possible disciplinary offences and dealt with in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Policy.

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9. Service Delivery

The Big Life group gives priority to working with people who have the least access to traditional services and work opportunities. This means people whose participation in society is limited by economic or social disadvantage, or who have suffered discrimination.

Our reception teams and staff will be trained to provide a welcoming and confidential service which encourages use of our services.

When planning services and allocating resources, we will take account of the diverse needs of the people we are working with. We will carry out Equality Impact Assessments (see Appendix One), to ensure all needs are catered for wherever possible. This will mean considering child care needs, timings of services for people who work or have children at school, providing for worship times of different faiths, providing information in different formats and languages. We will develop tailored and unique services to meet specific needs where this is identified as a priority.

10. Environment

We will ensure our buildings are accessible to people with physical disabilities, including ramped access, lifts, clear signage and induction loops. We will provide adaptations wherever possible to meet the specific needs of staff or clients.

11. Communications

The Big Life group have a professional Communications Team who will work with each business to ensure that marketing materials, signage, and social media are relevant and accessible to the people we work with. Each staff team will, with support from the Communications Team ensure translations, interpreters, large print, and audio/visual materials are made available.

12. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The Big Life group will monitor service user and volunteer demographics, the recruitment process, HR interventions, training opportunities and promotion to ensure that we do not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any one group and that we offer opportunities fairly.

The Big Life group will monitor the diversity of service users to ensure that we are reaching all the targeted communities we work with.

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Annually we will review all diversity monitoring information and implement plans for improving our services, recruitment, training, environments, communication and resources to continue to strive to meet the needs of the communities in which we work. The Executive Team and Boards will ensure that these plans are incorporated into annual targets and five year business plans.

13. Associated Policies

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Disclosure Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Flexible Working
- Family Friendly Policies
- Leave policy
- Promoting Attendance Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Whistle Blowing

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