

Reviewed June 2021– next review date June 2023

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A commitment to Equality and Diversity is one of the key values of YMCA Taunton.
- 1.2 We believe access to employment, advice and youth and community support we provide should be based on merit, fairness and need. We believe no-one should be treated less favourably because of their sex, racial/ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, age etc.
- 1.3 We expect everyone who works for us or with us to share these beliefs and to support us in trying to achieve this goal.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Equality** is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can take part and has the opportunity to fulfill their potential. It is about identifying patterns of experience, based on group identity, and the challenging processes that limit a person's life chances.

An equalities approach understands people's identity – in terms of sex, racial/ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, age, etc – impacts on their experiences.

- 2.2 **Diversity** means difference. It is recognising individual and group differences, treating people as individuals and placing positive value on those differences in both the community and the workforce. Individual and group diversity must be considered so as to ensure everyone's needs and requirements are understood and responded to.

A positive approach to Diversity recognises that in order to be inclusive, organisations may need to respond differently to individuals/groups.

- 2.3 **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less or more favourably than another in the same or similar circumstances.
- 2.4 **Indirect discrimination** is where a condition is applied which, though applied equally, has a disproportionate effect on certain groups (e.g. a particular ethnic group), cannot be justified and leads to a person or group of people suffering a loss or an advantage.

3.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY, SCOPE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 3.1 We recognise many of those we provide services to have suffered and still suffer disadvantage as a result of prejudice. By acting in accordance with an Equality and Diversity Policy, we aim to identify potential areas of concern and address them in a systematic way so as to promote equality, value diversity and comply with the law.

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.



- 3.2 The Equality and Diversity Policy applies to all of YMCA Taunton and all aspects of our work as a provider of support and advice and youth and community work, an employer and a purchaser of goods and services
- 3.3 We try to ensure our policies, procedures and working practices take account of Equality and Diversity issues and enable us to deliver services which meet the needs of all our customers, prospective customers and other stakeholders.
- 3.4 We expect organisations that work with us (such as contractors and consultants) to have their own Equality and Diversity policies or – if they do not – to comply with ours.
- 3.5 The Board is responsible for ensuring this policy underpins all aspects of the work of YMCA Taunton and for developing an organisational culture in which the policy can operate effectively and ensuring it is implemented.
- 3.6 All YMCA Taunton employees have a responsibility to ensure this policy is put into practice. We expect a personal commitment from all employees to making it work and to setting an exemplary standard for others to follow. Additional responsibilities apply to those who manage staff and/or are involved in recruitment, promotion, training and development.
- 3.7 All members of staff have a responsibility to:
- ensure they understand the values and benefits of Equality and Diversity
 - familiarise themselves with this policy, follow it, and ensure any staff for whom they are responsible do so as well
 - challenge discrimination where they see it and draw to the attention of their manager any instances of apparent discrimination or any perceived problem in relation to employment or the provision of services
 - act and behave in a way that supports the principles of Equality and Diversity
 - treat all customers, prospective customers, stakeholders, colleagues and members of the public with respect and courtesy regardless of their sex, racial/ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, age etc
 - take Equality and Diversity issues into account in decision-making
- 3.8 Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy are taken seriously and can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- 4.0 **TRAINING**
- 4.1 All staff members will receive training and/or coaching in Equality and Diversity during their induction. This may be supported by further coaching depending on their role.
- 4.2 All managers involved in recruitment and selection will receive training or coaching before they are part of any recruitment process.
- 4.3 Board members will receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to Equality and Diversity and take account of such issues in relation to governance, service delivery and employment.
- 4.4 This policy will, as a minimum, form the basic training in accordance with above

5.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 We aim to comply with the letter and spirit of relevant legislation, amendments and regulations through our policies, procedures and working practices. The major pieces of legislation include:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- EC Council Directive 2000/78 (equal treatment in employment/vocational training)
- Employment Act 1990, Employment Relations Act 1999 and Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Fixed Term Employees Regulations 2002
- Flexible Working Regulations 2002
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Housing Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1996
- Maternity & Parental Leave Regulations 1999 and Paternity & Adoption Leave Regulations 2002
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of less favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975

5.2 We also take account of Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and others on employment, housing and support. We try to comply with these codes and to incorporate examples of good practice into our approach.

6.0 APPROACH TO ISSUES OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 In providing its services, support, and as an employer, YMCA TAUNTON seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and fair treatment of everyone and to value diversity. This means that:

- No person or company seeking advice and support, youth work, employment or contracts with YMCA TAUNTON is treated less favourably because of their sex, racial/ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, age etc.
- YMCA TAUNTON seeks to identify the needs of disadvantaged people in the locality and help them by ensuring close relationships with representatives of disadvantaged groups. YMCA TAUNTON tries to assist disadvantaged people in the provision of services.
- YMCA TAUNTON may collate and monitor data relating to those seeking employment and youth services. These personal details form no part of the decision making process. The Board monitors practices and procedures on a regular basis to ensure no discrimination, intentional or otherwise, takes place.
- YMCA TAUNTON seeks to reflect our commitment to Equality and Diversity in the make-up and working practices of our Board of Management.

- Any YMCA TAUNTON employee, customer, job applicant or stakeholder, who feels they have experienced discrimination from YMCA TAUNTON employees, or through our working practices, can raise the matter through the complaints procedure.
- 6.2 YMCA TAUNTON recognises certain groups and people are discriminated against in society, directly or indirectly, at both personal and institutional levels. YMCA TAUNTON believes such discrimination is wrong and seeks to ensure policies and practices value Diversity and provide equal treatment to all in the provision of advice and support, youth work and employment.
- 6.3 YMCA TAUNTON recognises that its service is improved by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects populations and has the skills/understanding to achieve objectives.
- 6.4 YMCA TAUNTON strives to be an organisation that:
- Develops services to achieve Equality and Diversity in all its activities and understands how valuing Diversity can improve our ability to improve services
 - Actively consults and listens to employees, customers and others to ensure delivery of goals and development of services that are responsive and reflect a range of need
 - Provides all employees with training and development and creates a supportive, open environment where they have the opportunity to reach their full potential

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGIES**

7.1 YMCA TAUNTON's overall strategy is to ensure that the needs of the organisation, its services and its customers are met. The Equality and Diversity Policy is applied fully, fairly and consistently across the organisation as an integral part of staffing, business planning, processes and services. We achieve this in a number of ways:-

7.2 **Employment**

YMCA TAUNTON aspires to a diverse workforce with the skills and knowledge to achieve goals through provision of a quality service responsive to individual and community needs. We are committed to ensuring all employees are treated fairly. We aim to ensure all employees treat each other with dignity and respect and to create an environment where harassment is unacceptable and people are secure enough to raise complaints without fearing prejudice. We will deal with harassment through robust policies and procedures. To achieve our aims we will:

- Provide full and fair consideration to all job applications and provide managers with coaching before they take part in recruitment/selection
- Maintain records in relation to recruitment, training and employment and use this information to identify potential areas of inequality
- Provide sufficient training/support to meet employees' needs in discharging their work responsibilities
- Help all employees reach their full potential by ensuring they receive fair consideration of their training and career development needs
- Modify recruitment and employment practices, where possible, to reduce barriers experienced by members of disadvantaged groups
- Ensure we have robust harassment, stress/wellbeing and whistle blowing processes which can operate within a safe and open environment

7.3 Racial/Ethnic Origin

YMCA TAUNTON undertakes, as an employer and provider of advice and support and youth and community work to tackle unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people from different racial groups. To achieve our aims we will:

- Provide services relevant to peoples' needs and respect cultural/social identities
- Make sure services are available to members of disadvantaged groups
- Strive to have a representative workforce that can, as far as is practical, address the needs of all communities
- Strive to create an environment free from racial harassment and racist behaviour

7.4 Religion

YMCA TAUNTON undertakes to tackle unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion/belief and to promote good relations between people of different religions and beliefs. To achieve our aims we will:

- Strive to create an environment which recognises and respects religion/belief and is free from unlawful discrimination or harassment
- Develop services and practices in ways which recognise and respect religion and belief
- Improve the understanding of religion and belief among our staff so that they can sensitively address the needs of individuals and of different faith communities

7.5 Disability

YMCA TAUNTON is committed to eliminating both unlawful disability discrimination and the disadvantage experienced by people with a disability, wherever reasonably possible.

YMCA TAUNTON recognises people with a disability are disadvantaged, both by the environment and by social attitudes. To achieve our aims we will:

- Strive to provide services which are relevant to the needs of people with disability
- Make sure, as far as reasonably possible, that all services are available to people with a disability
- Where possible modify procedures or equipment to make full use of a person's ability and adapt facilities as necessary to accommodate people with a disability
- Train staff to give the awareness and confidence to support people with a disability where needed.
- Continue employing, whenever practicable, employees who become disabled during their employment, and assist in their re-training

7.6 Sex

YMCA TAUNTON is committed to achieving sex equality. To achieve our aims we will:

- Strive to create an environment free from harassment, sexist language and behaviour
- Ensure staff of both sexes are offered equal access to training and development opportunities within the workplace
- Create a flexible working environment where work and home balance requirements are recognised and supported in all areas and levels

7.7 Sexual Orientation

YMCA TAUNTON aims to create an environment where bi-sexual, lesbians and gay men are free from unfair treatment and feel safe to be open about their sexual orientation if they choose to do so. YMCA TAUNTON works to ensure employment policies and service delivery is not based on an assumption that everyone is heterosexual. To achieve our aims we will:

- Work towards equal application of services irrespective of any person's sexual orientation
- Ensure information is available on support for gay men, lesbian and bi-sexuals and that support organisations are aware of the service provided by YMCA TAUNTON

7.9 Transgender Status

YMCA TAUNTON believes that transsexual employees are entitled to be treated with respect and permitted to perform their jobs or live their lives free from harassment and unfair discrimination. Individuals who are considering, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment will receive the same respect and fairness as any other person. To achieve our aims we will:

- Ensure that transsexual people and individuals considering or undergoing the gender reassignment process are treated equally in terms of recruitment, employment and service delivery
- Ensure that support and appropriate time is given to people undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to gender reassignment.

7.10 Age

YMCA TAUNTON is opposed to unjustified age discrimination which we recognise can affect all age groups. We believe age is no indicator of effectiveness in most activities, services should be sensitive to the needs of all age groups and employment decisions should not be based on age alone.

YMCA TAUNTON will seek to ensure employment policies and services are fair to all age groups and will work to create an environment where people are judged on their talents, skills and experiences rather than on prejudices about age. To achieve our aims we will:

- Ensure there are no age-related criteria in our employment practices
- Ensure, where possible, that services are accessible to all age groups
- Provide recruitment, promotion and training based on need, regardless of age.
- Work to ensure older workers are enabled to leave YMCA TAUNTON with dignity and flexibility

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Every staff member will be informed in writing that this new policy has been introduced and managers will bring it to staff members' attention in team meetings and supervision meetings, asking staff to read the new document, seek clarification if they require it and refer to and follow it in future.

8.2 Electronic copies of the updated policy and procedure manual are available in the admin office for reference purposes and staff members are regularly reminded to consult the manual.

8.3 Managers will seek to identify any training needs that may arise as a result of the introduction of this policy and bring these to the attention of the General Manager so that they can be incorporated into the YMCA TAUNTON training programme.

9.0 **COMPLIANCE MONITORING**

9.1 Statistical information relating to the sex, racial/ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and age will be gathered in relation to:-

- Employment and Board member applications received
- Shortlisted/non-shortlisted employment and Board member applicants
- Employment and Board member applicants successful/unsuccessful at interview
- Complaints
- Employment grievances, disciplinary and resignations

9.2 When the relevant IT system is in place, reports on all of the above will be considered by the General Manager quarterly. Significant variances will be reported to the Board together with details of any remedial action proposed.

Lead responsibility: GENERAL MANAGER

Adopted by YMCA TAUNTON Board of Management on:

Date: 15th November 2017

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

for and on behalf of YMCA TAUNTON Board of Management