



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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1. Background

Abbeyfield the Dales Ltd.'s (ATD) aim is to provide diverse homes and workplaces which reflect the communities we live in and where everyone is welcome regardless of background, identity, or circumstances.

It is vital that we provide inclusive workplaces where everyone feels able to participate fully and achieve their potential. Fostering an inclusive culture helps all of us to benefit from a wider range of these different perspectives, experiences, and skills. We believe that this creates a happier, more productive working environment for us all and happier homes for our residents.

The origins of Abbeyfield in the 1950's are closely associated with and linked to the Christian faith, and through the years its member societies have evolved to where ATD is a modern organisation that promotes equality and inclusion. We are proud to be a diverse organisation and we seek to support and celebrate the recruitment, development and retention of a diverse workforce and undertakes to ensure equality of treatment for all employees.

2. Objectives

ATD aims to provide a working environment that values diversity and treats people with fairness and respect to maximise their talents and resources.

The aim of this Policy is to:

- Support ATD's approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the employment lifecycle.
- Ensure that all individuals are clear about their responsibility in supporting, celebrating, and protecting ATD's commitment to Equality and Diversity.
- Prevent discrimination occurring in any aspect of our work. This applies to all aspects of employment with us which includes recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- Recognise the needs of individuals and to treat each person with dignity and respect.
- Ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion is embedded in all our existing policies, procedures and practices and is at the forefront of our thinking when making business decisions.
- We will treat individuals who want to work for us and organisations wishing to be associated with us or use our premises fairly and consistently. We will not employ or engage with them where doing so would likely create offence or distress to our residents, existing staff and volunteers. We will be clear of the reason if this is the case.
- ATD will also comply with all relevant and current legislation.

This policy can be amended by ATD at any time and does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

3. Scope

The principles set out in this Policy apply to the treatment of people within Abbeyfield The Dales Ltd (ATD), which includes all current and potential residents and service users, their relatives and advocates, employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors and all other third parties, and the treatment of our employees by third parties.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion. Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination in our workplace. This policy is relevant to all stages of the employment relationship and covers discrimination that occurs both inside and outside of the workplace, such as training courses, business trips, events or social functions organised by, or on

behalf of ATD. It includes face to face and all other forms of communication such as the internet, email and social media.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

4. Policy

We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our organisation but supports wellbeing and enables our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong.

We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society against discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender, gender identity and gender reassignment status
- Sexual Orientation
- Marital and civil partnership status
- Pregnancy, maternity and paternity
- Race, racial group, nationality or ethnicity
- Religion or Belief
- Part-time or fixed term status; or
- Any other personal characteristics.

4.1. What is discrimination?

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may occur directly, indirectly, by association, or by perception. It is not always obvious and can be subtle and unconscious.

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former staff, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

Discrimination stems from a person's general assumptions about the abilities, interests and characteristics of a particular group that influences how they treat those people (known as "unconscious bias"). Such assumptions or prejudices may cause them to apply requirements or conditions that put those in particular groups at a disadvantage. Examples include:

- Steering employees into particular types of work on the basis of stereotypical assumptions without considering the particular attributes and abilities of individuals.
- Recruiting or promoting individuals into particular roles because of assumptions about the reactions or preferences of other employees or clients.
- Using different standards for different groups of employees to judge performance.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

4.1.1. Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or sexual orientation.

There are several sub-types of direct discrimination which include perception, where the person subjecting another to discrimination does so through an incorrect belief

the victim has a protected characteristic, or by association where the victim is associated to someone or a group of people which have or share a protected characteristic. Examples could be to decline a job applicant because you 'think' they belong to a particular religion, or to exclude a member of staff from an event because they are a member of an organisation supporting LGBTQ+ rights.

4.1.2. In-Direct Discrimination

A provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women (in the main) because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

4.1.3. Associative Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example because their partner is transgender.

4.1.4. Discrimination by perception

Treating someone less favourably because you perceive them to have a protected characteristic even if they do not.

4.1.5. Harassment

This includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Dignity at Work Policy.

4.1.6. Victimisation

Treating another person detrimentally either because that person has made a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or because they have supported someone else who has made such a complaint, for example by giving a witness statement that supports the allegations.

4.1.7. Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient. Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online or on social media. Bullying may occur at work or outside work. If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

4.1.8. Disability Discrimination

This includes:

- Any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- Dismissing someone because of their disability-related absence; or
- Disciplining someone for losing their temper where such loss of temper was out of character and was due to severe pain.

4.1.9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employer's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failing to comply with this duty is unlawful. Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:

- Allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague.
- Changing their working hours or place of work.
- Adjusting procedures for assessing job candidates; and
- Making reasonable adjustments to disciplinary and grievance procedures with guidance from our HR consultants.

4.2. Roles and Responsibilities

4.2.1. Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Ultimate responsibility to ensure that this policy is consistently applied and monitored.
- Leads by example and takes responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting, and applying this policy.
- Advise managers on the application of the policy.
- Providing advice and guidance to managers, employees, and volunteers to support them in achieving the values and principles of Equality, Diversity and inclusion.
- Treats employees and third parties (including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants) fairly and with dignity, trust, and respect. This may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute; and
- Constructively challenges inappropriate comments or ways of working, to help achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.

4.2.2. Board of Trustees

- Demonstrates commitment to the effective operation of this policy.
- Leads by example and takes responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying this policy.
- Treats colleagues and third parties (including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants) fairly and with dignity, trust and respect. This may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute.
- Constructively challenges inappropriate comments or ways of working, in order to help achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.
- Agrees priorities and objectives for the organisation to achieve.
- Takes steps to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is reflected in the composition of the Board and its Committees.

4.2.3. Line Managers

- Ensure that good practice in the area of equal opportunity is applied within their department, house and/or home.
- Leads by example and takes responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting, and applying.
- Treats employees and third parties (including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants) fairly and with dignity, trust, and respect. This may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute.

- Ensure that employees are aware that discriminatory and disrespectful behaviour is unacceptable and challenge all unacceptable behaviour.
- Deal with any issues that arise quickly and sensitively using the appropriate policy and procedure.
- Ensure all employees complete appropriate online training.

4.2.4. Employees

- Accept personal responsibility for the application of this policy.
- Treats colleagues and third parties (including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants) fairly and with dignity, trust, and respect.
- Constructively challenges inappropriate comments or ways of working, to help achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.
- Bring to their manager's attention any examples of discrimination of which they become aware. These issues will be investigated and remedied promptly and sensitively using the appropriate policy and procedure.
- Complete appropriate online training.

4.3. Recruitment & Selection

We will recruit, select and promote based on the basis of applicant competencies, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in line with the criteria set out in the job description. These should be reflected throughout the whole recruitment process, from drawing up adverts to taking up references.

All vacancies will be advertised internally. External vacancies will generally be advertised to a diverse section of potential applicants, we will avoid stereotyping or wording in our adverts that may discourage particular groups from applying. A copy of this policy will be made available on request.

We may take steps to promote our vacancies to particular groups that we have identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in ATD.

We will ask applicants at the outset if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to the recruitment process.

Job applicants should not be asked about their health or disability before a job offer is made, except in limited circumstances and only with the approval of HR such as:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any workplace adjustments)
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any workplace adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons where we can accommodate this, and it is appropriate for the role we are employing to.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).
- Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

Job applicants will not be asked questions which may be seen as discriminatory, for example, applicants should never be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Anyone making a decision about recruitment will not discriminate and challenge themselves, and other members of the recruitment selection panel, to make sure that any stereotypes, unconscious bias or prejudice do not play any part in recruitment decisions.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to

produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the Recruitment Department or UK Visas and Immigration.

More information can be found in the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.

4.4. Learning & Development

All employees are afforded equal access to training, development and promotion opportunities. Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals which will be based entirely on an objective assessment of performance and will not be influenced by any Protected Characteristics that you may have. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit.

4.5. Diversity & Inclusion Training

We will provide you with regular training to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands the contents of this policy. Following the training, you will be required to confirm that you have read, understand and will comply with this policy.

4.6. Terms & conditions of Employment

We will ensure our terms and conditions of service, benefits and facilities are available to all employees who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

We believe that employees of all genders should receive equal pay for the same or similar work, work rated as equivalent under a job evaluation scheme, or work of equal value. We will achieve this by operating a fair and transparent pay system based on objective criteria and free from gender bias.

We are committed to helping our employees to balance their family commitments with their work responsibilities, the opportunities for flexible working will depend on the needs of the business but we will make every effort to accommodate requests. We encourage our employees to consider flexible working arrangements in accordance with the company's Flexible Working Policy.

4.7. Part-Time and Fixed-Term Work

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

4.8. Termination of Employment

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not discriminatory.

We will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

4.9. Disability Inclusion

If you have a disability or become disabled, you are not obliged but you are encouraged to tell ATD about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate. This may involve seeking a medical report and/or a referral to occupational health. We will try our best to accommodate the employee's needs within reason; if we are unable to make a particular adjustment, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take steps to improve access.

We understand that some people find it hard to discuss their disabilities and that disability can be invisible. Psychological safety, where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences, is paramount to ensuring disability inclusion. However, this is only possible if we treat people with dignity, trust and respect and we expect everyone to uphold these values.

We do not tolerate ableist language in our organisation. Ableist language is language that is negative, inappropriate or offensive towards people with a disability and may take the form of jokes or "banter". If an employee adopts such language, we will take appropriate action including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary Policy.

4.10. Religious Beliefs

Religious beliefs are respected and any requests in terms of accommodating religious practices are considered carefully and where possible will be accommodated, whilst balancing the needs of the people we support.

4.11. Menopause

It is essential that we support employees through the menopause. Our Menopause Policy aims to raise awareness of menopause and sets out the things to consider when employees are going through the menopause.

4.12. Equal Opportunity Monitoring

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' and employee equality information. Provision of this information is voluntary, and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment, or any other decision related to their employment or promotion. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy and in accordance with data protection legislation. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

We will monitor equality and diversity to help us understand and eradicate any adverse impacts of our current and future policies, procedures and practices.

Monitoring is also an important element of the Equalities Act, employees and candidates will be asked to provide monitoring data which is utilised to assess how well our workforce compares with the demographics and make-up of the localities in which they are based. As an organisation, we must be able to demonstrate our commitment to diversity in this way.

This is compliant with our data protection obligations.

4.13. Breaches of this Policy

ATD take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination will be investigated which may result in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination, or witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Dignity at Work policy. We encourage you to discuss any concerns with your line manager in the first instance, where you fail to receive a satisfactory response, this may be escalated to your relevant member of SLT.

Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about or report discrimination. If you believe you have been victimised for making a complaint or report of discrimination or have witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you should raise this through our Grievance Procedure.

We encourage the reporting of all types of potential discrimination, as this assists us in ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion principles are adhered to in the workplace. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

4.14. Complaints

Complaints regarding discrimination against you, other staff, our residents and their representatives, or complaint regarding external parties such as contractors should be discussed with your line manager.

Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate, and in line with our Comments, Compliments & Complaints policy. We will also monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved, and workforce training is targeted where needed.

Complaints regarding equal pay will be dealt with through the Company's Grievance Policy.

5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value

N/A

6. Supported Appendices

N/A

7. Linked Policies

Comments, Compliments & Complaints (LG006P)

Dignity at Work (S007P)

Disciplinary (S008P)

Flexible & Home Working (S041P)

Grievance (S014P)

Menopause (S042P)

Recruitment and Selection (S021P)

Whistleblowing (LG038P)

8. Legislation/Regulation

The relevant statutory requirements are contained in:

- The Equality Act 2010;
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; and
- Human Rights Act 1998.

ATD will abide by the relevant Acts and Regulations and any subsequent amendments or additions.

It will also comply with the requirements of:

- The Equality Act 2010 Statutory Code of Practice, Services, Public Functions and Associations from the Equality and Human Rights Commission
- The Statutory Code of Practice on Employment from the Equality and Human Rights Commission

- The Respect ASB Charter for Housing
- The Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Framework
- The NHF Code of Governance 2020

9. Review

Every 3 years, subject to regulatory and legislative changes.

10. Procedure/Guidance

N/A