



# Inclusion & Diversity Policy

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**Look Ahead**  
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

## **Our mission**

**Working with people to make choices, achieve goals and take control of their lives through high quality care, support and housing.**

## **Our values**

**Excellence**

**Aspiration**

**Partnership**

**Trust**

**[lookahead.org.uk](http://lookahead.org.uk)**

## Policy Summary

### 1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees; Board, Staff, PSA's, contractors, volunteers, job applicants and our customers. As well as the communities in which we work.
- 1.2 It applies to all aspects of employment from recruitment and selection through to termination of employment.
- 1.3 All of us at Look Ahead are responsible for ensuring that Inclusion and Diversity policies are actively implemented and we should be aware of our personal responsibility to each other, customers, contractors, suppliers, visitors and members of the public.

## Our Vision

### 2 Vision

- 2.1 At Look Ahead we want to create a genuinely inclusive workplace, with a culture where colleagues and customers feel they belong and are valued and respected. We are committed to ensuring that our workforce reflects the diverse customer base which we serve, recognising that this enables us to better understand their unique and varied needs and priorities.
- 2.2 Inclusion is about engaging the uniqueness, talents, beliefs, backgrounds, abilities and ways of working of all our colleagues and customers so that they fulfil their individual potential. Embracing diversity means that we will ensure our staff and customers are representative of wider society.
- 2.3 Look Ahead is committed to ensuring that Inclusion and Diversity runs through everything we do as an organisation. As an organisation we will encourage and expect everyone to contribute to an environment in which everyone can feel comfortable expressing who they are, how they feel and what they need, knowing that they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued. The Board will hold overall responsibility to ensure that this vision is delivered throughout Look Ahead.
- 2.4 Look Ahead is committed to developing an inclusive culture which is reflected in a diverse organisation; embracing those with protected characteristics; lived experience, diverse skill sets and encouraging cognitive diversity across working groups.
- 2.5 This policy is intended to assist the organisation to put this vision into practice. Following the policy will help employees create an inclusive workplace that will benefit all.

### 3 Legislation

- 3.1 Look Ahead will work within current and relevant anti-discrimination laws. The Equality Act 2010 brought together previous legislation and strengthened equality laws, prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination due to the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Maternity and Pregnancy
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires Look Ahead to meet certain statutory duties to tackle persistent and long-standing issues of disadvantage. As an organisation we will ensure that our employees (paid and unpaid) and customers are treated fairly and equally and receive equal services and opportunities. **Appendix 1** provides a list of inclusivity areas.

## 4 Definitions

- 4.1 **Equality** is about treating people fairly and without discrimination regardless of who they are. It is about recognising that inequality is often caused by circumstances not of an individual's own making and taking positive action to address this. Our commitment to equality ensures that policies, procedures and practices do not discriminate against staff, customers or other people we come into contact with.
- 4.2 Respecting **diversity** ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to Look Ahead and to their community. This means that we recognise that different people have different needs that need to be met in order for them to experience equal opportunities and equal outcomes.
- 4.3 **Direct Discrimination** occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably explicitly on the grounds of a characteristic for example their race, skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender reassignment status, relationship status, caring responsibility, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, religion and belief, medical status (e.g. HIV), employment status, physical appearance, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities or for any other reason regarded as unjustifiable.
- 4.4 **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a requirement or condition, which although applying equally to people of all groups, is applied in such a way that at least a significant minority of a particular group are considerably disadvantaged on this basis. For example, dress codes have sometimes been held to discriminate indirectly against people on the basis of their gender or religious belief.
- 4.5 **Associative Discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

- 4.6 **Perceptive Discrimination** is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess the characteristic.
- 4.7 **Victimisation** in the context of equality and diversity occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted their rights under legislation, for example the Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or the Disability Discrimination Act, or acted as a whistle-blower on such activity.
- 4.8 **Harassment** relates to repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an employee or resident or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment does not need to be based on the characteristics of an individual, but can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by an individual or group of people. The Equality Act makes employers potentially liable for harassment of employees by people (third parties) who are not employees, such as customers or clients.
- 4.9 **Positive Action** refers to measures taken to assist participants and groups who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of confidence, knowledge and achievement that is comparable with their peers. These measures would normally take the form of additional training, positive recruitment amongst certain groups and making public a commitment to redressing any imbalance in participation and challenge historical barriers. An example might be explicitly welcoming applications from a particular group which are currently underrepresented in a particular area of work.

## Organisational Commitment

### 5 Inclusion & Diversity in Employment

- 5.1 Look Ahead is committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.
- 5.2 Job descriptions will only include requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job, taking into account any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.
- 5.3 Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.
- 5.4 Look Ahead will reflect on whether its standard working practices (e.g. number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked, and the location) have any possible indirectly discriminatory effects.
- 5.5 The organisation will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The organisation will also make workplace adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

- 5.6 Look Ahead will monitor the protected characteristics of our existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including internal promotions), and the number of people with protected characteristics within these groups, and will consider taking any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.
- 5.7 Look Ahead will not discriminate against ex-employees; for example refusing to provide a reference relating to one of the protected characteristics

## **6 Inclusion & Diversity in Service Delivery**

- 6.1 Look Ahead recognises the diversity of its customers and will ensure that it delivers accessible services and equitable outcomes across its customer groups
- 6.2 Look Ahead is committed to drawing upon “Lived Experience” from Customers and Staff and creating channels to ensure the “User Voice” is heard.
- 6.3 Look Ahead understands that without understanding the individual needs of our service users we cannot tailor service delivery to meet the needs of our customers. As such, Look Ahead will focus on improving the quality of service experience for all our customers
- 6.4 Look Ahead recognises that the majority of our customers face discrimination and disadvantage by virtue of having experienced homelessness, exploitation, having a disability, low income etc.

Look Ahead will actively tackle discrimination and reduce disadvantage by:

- Supporting customers to sustain tenancies and build independent living skills;
- Providing positive environments which enable customers to influence and take control of their lives;
- Supporting customers to maximise income and achieve financial inclusion;
- Supporting customers to engage in the community and breakdown barriers;
- Developing positive partnerships that increase positive pathways and improves health and Well being; and
- Making reasonable adjustments to overcome social and physical disabilities.

## **7 Raising an Inclusion & Diversity Concern**

- 7.1 Customer – Complaints and feedback. If you are a customer and you have a concern or a complaint to make, you can raise it in one of the following ways:
- Speak with a support worker;
  - Email your complaint to: [FeedBack@lookahead.org.uk](mailto:FeedBack@lookahead.org.uk);
  - Call the Customer Contact Centre on 03330104600.
- 7.2 Staff – If you are a member of staff you can raise a complaint in the following ways;

- During supervision or 121 with your line manager;
- Refer to the relevant sections of the Grievance or Harassment and Bullying policies on The Hub;
- Refer to the Whistleblowing process on The Hub, contacting Head of Corporate Governance and Assurance;
- Raise it with a staff representative in Look Ahead's Employee Forum (starting October 2018);
- Email the Human Resources department on:  
[HumanResourcesAdmin@lookahead.org.uk](mailto:HumanResourcesAdmin@lookahead.org.uk).

## Accountability

### 8 Monitoring and Reporting

- 8.1 Look Ahead will deliver an Inclusion and Diversity strategy and embed it across all business functions which seeks to:
- Create and maintain an inclusive work environment for all staff;
  - Attract, develop and retain staff from the widest pool of talent;
  - Ensure our diversity data drives our annual inclusion initiatives;
  - Ensure compliance with legal regulations and requirements relating to diversity and inclusion; and
  - Deliver accessible services and equitable outcomes across customer groups
- 8.2 This will be monitored through People Inclusion and Diversity KPIs data every 6 months and the Customer Insight Data dashboard every quarter;
- 8.3 Where there are any issues, actions will be taken to resolve them;
- 8.4 The Board has overall responsibility for the delivery and embedding of the Inclusion and Diversity policy, practices and vision throughout the organisation.

### 9 Roles and Responsibilities

- 9.1 Our **Board of Management** has overall accountability for Inclusion and Diversity.
- 9.2 **SLT** provides leadership, resources and governance to deliver our diversity and inclusion vision and business objectives.
- 9.3 The **Senior Management Team (SMT)** reviews progress against our plans and identifies emerging issues that need to be addressed.
- 9.4 The **Head of Organisational Development** and wider team are responsible for overseeing and analysing the data submitted by employees and job applicant and reporting against compliance, trends and KPI's.

- 9.5 The **Director of Customer Experience** and wider team are responsible for overseeing Customer Inclusion and Diversity insight data and reporting against trends and KPI's.
- 9.6 **Heads of Services** are responsible for developing, delivering and monitoring Inclusion and Diversity actions as part of the business planning process.
- 9.7 All our staff and partners are responsible for understanding and applying our Inclusion and Diversity values, standards and behaviours in their day to day work.

## 10 Related Documents

Document	Link
<b>Connected Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy &amp; Procedure</li> <li>• Harassment &amp; Bullying in the workplace</li> <li>• Grievance Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Feedback and Complaints</li> <li>• Confidentiality and Data Protection</li> <li>• Customer Insight strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Information Sheet</b>	
<b>Easy Read</b>	
<b>External Websites</b>	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en</a> <a href="https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/about-us/inclusion-diversity-and-equality">https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/about-us/inclusion-diversity-and-equality</a> <a href="http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1363">http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1363</a>
<b>Legislation/Regulation</b>	The Equality Act 2010

## 11 Glossary

<b>Lived experience</b>	Lived experience refers to a representation of the experiences and choices of a given person, and the knowledge that they gain from these experiences.
<b>Cognitive diversity</b>	Cognitive diversity has been defined as differences in perspective or styles of processing knowledge. It is not predicted by factors such as gender, ethnicity or age. When groups or teams of people have greater cognitive diversity, they are better able to innovate and produce the best results.
<b>Implicit bias/ Implicit social cognition/unconscious bias</b>	A bias which happens automatically, triggered by our brain making quick judgements and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, social stereotypes about certain groups of people, cultural environment and personal experiences. These biases can be incompatible with a person's conscious values.

## 12 Version Control

<b>Version no.</b>	1	<b>Date effective: June 2019</b>	
<b>Brief summary of changes:</b>	Previous Policy entitled Equality & Diversity Policy and Procedure 2013-2016		



	Comprehensive Review
<b>Colleague consultation:</b>	Policy Group, Inclusion and Diversity Staff Group (Workplace), HR department.
<b>Other consultation:</b>	Inclusive Employers
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Senior Leadership Team and Board (17 <sup>th</sup> June 2019)
<b>Author(s):</b>	Claudia Bartram - Head of Organisational Development Olivia Gray- Transformation Programme Officer Nicole Njie - Director Customer Experience
<b>Review date:</b>	June 2022

**13 We are committed to being an Inclusive Employer, you can find out more at [www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk](http://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk).**

## Appendix 1

At Look Ahead, when we talk about inclusivity, we are considering the following areas, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- Age
- Disability
- Caring responsibility
- Gender reassignment status
- Gypsy or traveler heritage
- Medical status, including HIV/AIDS Status
- National origin
- Race, ethnicity or colour
- Physical abilities
- Refugee status
- Parental responsibility
- Physical appearance
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Employment
- Sexual orientation
- Social background
- Marriage, Civil partnership or relationship status
- Pregnancy or maternity status
- Trade union membership and activities





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Services we would be proud  
for our loved ones to receive