

Children's University Trust

Equalities Policy

Review Date: December 2024

Approved by Trustees on: June 2022

Next Review Date: December 2025

You are advised that a printed version may not be the latest available version. The latest version, which supersedes all previous versions, is available in Drop Box. Those to whom this policy applies, are responsible for familiarising themselves with the latest version and for complying with the policy requirements at all times.

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Children's University Trust Equalities Policy

1. Rationale

Children's University Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all and to celebrating the diversity of everyone in our charity. It is part of our ethos to strive to make Children's University Trust an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where all can achieve their potential. We value each person as an individual and acknowledge the gifts that every human being offers; accordingly, it is our intention that all are valued as equals. As an inclusive charity, we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that our charity is welcoming to everyone. We do not accept any form of intolerance and recognise our responsibility to challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. We aim to both satisfy the legal requirements of the Equality Act and to actively promote equality in any way we can.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only a legal requirement and good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. This policy will help all employees develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our Equalities policy is an essential part of our safeguarding practice. Children's University Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the young people who participate in Children's University. We believe the welfare of the child is paramount and that no child should suffer harm of any form, either at home or within the work of Children's University Trust. Everyone who works at or visits us has the responsibility to make sure all our children are safe.

For the purposes of this policy, 'staff' also includes staff and volunteers working on behalf Children's University Trust, and 'parents' includes carers and legal guardians – unless this is clarified further within the text.

2. Aims

Children's University Trust aims to:

- embed the principles of the Equality Act as far as possible in all our work;
- provide a secure and accessible environment for all who work with us;
- foster fair and equitable employment practices;
- promote equality of opportunity in our work;
- welcome diversity and give young people opportunities to positively explore diversity;
- ensure that children learn from example to respect the feelings and beliefs of others;
- challenge and eliminate discrimination wherever we encounter it;
- ensure that all children have the equal right to be safeguarded;
- ensure that staff and volunteers feel valued and included;
- ensure that staff can work in an environment that protects their needs, including well-being and mental health.

3. Definitions

Discriminatory behavior is defined as:

- direct discrimination: someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of some racial groups from using our services.
- indirect discrimination: someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak English in the organisation;

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- association: discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic e.g. behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background; or
- perception: discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic e.g. assuming someone is gay because of their mannerisms or how they speak.

4. Implementation

This policy is the responsibility of everyone who works at or visits Children's University Trust. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure that arrangements will be made to bring this policy to the notice of all staff during induction and throughout their time at Children's University Trust so that they fulfill their duties to co-operate with this policy. The CEO will ensure that all staff are given appropriate training and support to meet these responsibilities and monitor closely and treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness. All staff have a responsibility to keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work and must support the ethos of Children's University Trust through their actions. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring Children's University Trust complies with legislation, and that the Equalities policy, practice and related procedures and any action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed and monitored. This policy and procedure will apply in all contexts, including our activities with children and within our staff and governing bodies. Children's University Trust expects services delivered by our member organisations to have Equalities policies in place. They should undertake all their work activities mindful of equalities issues, including planning, assessment and individual support for young people who may need this. They should demonstrate an awareness of how to promote diversity and how to respond to and deal with any prejudice-related incidents which occur. This policy should appear on the Children's University Trust website.

5. Other policies

This policy works in conjunction with the following Children's University Trust related policies and procedures:

1. *Antibullying*
2. *Complaints*
3. *Online Safety*
4. *Safeguarding and Child Protection*
5. *Safer Recruitment*
6. *Whistleblowing*

6. Monitoring and Review

Children's University Trust will seek to continually improve all its related safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines and will review this policy on a regular basis to confirm that content and approach is still appropriate. The review will take place whenever there are significant changes and not later than 12 months from the previous review date. The provision of equality of opportunity for all employees and job applicants will be monitored through the collection and analysis of statistical data on the status of all fulltime and part-time employees and job applicants

7. Law and Guidance

This Equalities policy has been developed in response to the Equality Act 2010. This Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a discrimination law that protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. The Equalities Act 2010 requires Children's University Trust to not discriminate against anyone on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Act. These protected characteristics are:

- Disability
- Race

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

All forms of unlawful discrimination are prohibited within Children's University Trust.

8. Employment practices

Children's University Trust is committed to promoting equal opportunities in our workplace. We will ensure the following:

(i) All employees and job applicants (actual or potential) will be treated fairly and selection for employment, promotion, training and any other benefit or exercise (such as redundancy exercises) will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

(ii) Children's University Trust will promote equal opportunities for all staff and a good and harmonious working environment where all employees are treated with respect and dignity, and in which no form of intimidation or harassment will be tolerated. Children's University Trust is committed to fulfilling all legal obligations under the relevant anti-discrimination legislation and associated codes of practice.

(iii) If staff are disabled or become disabled, Children's University Trust will encourage them to speak about their condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

(iv) Part time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified. This policy does not form part of a contract of employment and Children's University Trust may amend it at any time.

(v) Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through our grievance procedure or Antibullying Policy. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of the employee to pursue complaints under the Equality Act 2010.

(vi) Every effort will be made to ensure that employees making complaints pursuant to this policy will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal. However, making a false allegation of discrimination or harassment deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with.

(vii) Breaches of our Equalities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings and disciplinary action. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

9. Children: Participation

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Children's University Trust aims for activities to be open to all children and we are committed to encouraging disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use our activities. We will strive to ensure:

- that the diversity of our communities is reflected in our publicity and promotional materials
- to provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form
- to encourage everyone to be aware of our Equalities policy
- to not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our activities, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act 2010; and
- to not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to Children's University Trust activities for reasons relating to disability.

9. Children: Activities

Activities validated by Children's University Trust and provided or delivered by our partners should encourage children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. These activities should:

- make young people feel valued and good about themselves
- encourage children to empathise with others and work to create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- ensure that the dietary requirements of children that arise from their medical, religious or cultural needs are met if needed
- be accessible and risk assessed to be safe and welcoming to all children
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults and those with a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments

Children's University Trust and our member organisations running local Children's Universities and our Learning Providers commit to:

- continually audit access to monitor if activities are accessible to all children
- ensuring that staff are aware of the vulnerable children in their activities and are committed to ensuring they are given the extra support and protection they will need to participate fully
- prohibit display of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials; and
- challenge discriminatory remarks, name calling or threatening behaviour in the strongest manner.

10. Children: Safeguarding

Children's University Trust is fully committed to ensuring that all children have an equal right to be safeguarded. When recognising welfare concerns, it is important that staff should respect different family patterns and lifestyles that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. The Children Act 1989 promotes the view that 'family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins and other characteristics should be respected.' At the same time Children's University Trust is clear that child abuse cannot be condoned for religious or cultural reasons. We are mindful that the Equality Act 2010 'puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs.'

11. Complaints

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The Children's University Trust Complaints Policy and Procedure is available to any service user who believes that they may have been unfairly discriminated against by Children's University Trust. Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of Trust staff who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Discriminatory conduct, harassment or victimisation will be treated as gross misconduct.