

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy statement

1.1 The Alternatives to Violence Project Britain (AVPB) exists to facilitate and support individuals' learning about ways of addressing conflict that do not involve physical or other violence. Promoting equality and valuing diversity are fundamental to our mission.

1.2 The principles of inclusiveness, tolerance and fairness are central to our legitimacy as an organisation which promotes a society that is violence-free.

1.3 This policy exists to ensure equal access to employment, volunteering and courses at AVPB.

1.4 AVPB will not accept unfair discrimination or less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity or trade union activity (see section 6 for definitions) as an employer or in the running of our organisation.

1.5 This policy is fully supported by AVPB's Board, which has given clear direction and leadership that promoting equality is a priority. Staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to it at all times.

1.6 The commitments in this policy underpin all other AVPB policies.

2. Policy Aims

2.1 The aim of this policy is to create an organisation where;

- Every person is able to give of their best.
- Decisions are fair and based on merit, competence and potential.
- In our work we take account of individuals' experiences and needs.
- Unfair discrimination is not tolerated.

2.2 AVPB understands that to do this we will need to address the root causes and impacts of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as the indirect discrimination that can unintentionally arise from our policies, practices and procedures.

2.3 Through this policy AVPB also aims to;

- Attract and retain supporters, staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors and consultants that reflect the diverse community in which we operate and who are committed to our equality principles.
- Build an organisational culture that is tolerant, open and inclusive and where people feel safe, where differences are accepted, engagement is apparent and the contributions of all are encouraged, valued and respected.

- Prioritise equality in every aspect of our work including employment, fundraising, campaigning, marketing, publishing, events and procurement so that we can meet the needs of all our stakeholders.

3. Policy Implementation

3.1 In order to translate this policy into action AVPB will;

- Consult, engage with, and learn from our stakeholders in the development and delivery of an equality action plan and on our work more broadly.
- Monitor and collect evidence on the impact of our policies, practices, procedures and cultures on equality issues.
- Implement tailored positive actions to respond to the evidence we collect.
- Level the playing field for disabled people through the provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals
- Train our staff and volunteers, including Board members and consultants working with AVPB for more than a month, to carry out this policy and embed equality principles into all relevant training, including induction.
- Communicate this policy to all our stakeholders so that they are aware of our commitment to treat them fairly and their obligation to operate in line with this policy.
- Take appropriate action when incidents occur which breach this policy
- Regularly monitor and review the success of this policy in promoting equality and evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of our action plan.

4. Our Legal Duties

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 replaced a number of existing anti-discrimination laws to simplify and strengthen equality law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply.

4.2 This policy is the instrument through which AVPB complies with our obligations as an employer and a service provider as set out in the Act. As such all our stakeholders need to understand the protections and obligations conferred on them by the Act.

4.3 The purpose of the Act is that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using services. It protects people from discrimination by employers and service providers on the basis of nine protected characteristics;

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

4.4 Trade union representatives and members also have legal protection against unfair treatment on the ground of trade union activity. We will not treat employees unfairly on the grounds of trade union membership or non-membership. Unfair treatment includes dismissal and subjecting employees to detrimental treatment. We respect the right of staff to join a trade union of their choosing if they so wish.

4.5 The Equality Act protects our members, staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors and consultants against:

- **Direct discrimination:** This occurs where, because of a protected characteristic, a person receives worse treatment than someone who does not have that characteristic. For example, an employee is turned down for a job because their manager believes that their sexual orientation will prevent them gaining their team's respect. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
- **Discrimination by association:** This is discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, a cis-gendered man is treated less favourably at an event because of his friendship with a trans man.
- **Perception discrimination:** This is discrimination against an individual because others think (incorrectly) that they possess a protected characteristic. For example, an employee is not offered the chance to represent her company at a major event because her line manager believes she has mental health issues.
- **Indirect discrimination:** This occurs when there is a policy or a practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic compared with people who do not have that characteristic. For example, including unnecessary criteria that are more difficult for people with a particular protected characteristic to meet in a person specification for a job.
- **Harassment:** This is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else because they have complained about discrimination, or are suspected of doing so or have supported someone else who has.

4.6 Disabled people are specifically protected against discrimination 'arising from disability'. For example they would be protected from an employer penalising them from taking regular comfort breaks to manage chronic pain when they would reasonably be expected to know that the employee has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

4.7 Disabled people also have a legal right to reasonable adjustments from their service provider or employer, for example, through the provision of specific software, furniture or lighting.

4.8 A person is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which they are entitled.

4.9 It would be discrimination to treat someone less favourably for being absent from work in connection with gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.

4.10 AVPB expects our staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors and consultants to behave in accordance with the above provisions.

4.11 AVPB will make its commitment to equality clear in our working with members, supporters and donors,

5. Definitions and Further Explanations

This policy is based on the following definitions and explanations.

Disability is defined by the Equality Act as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means has lasted, or is expected to last, for 12 months. Included in this definition are:

- Physical impairments (including asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc.)
- Sensory impairments such as hearing impairment or visual impairment.
- Severe facial disfigurement.
- Progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection.
- People who have had an impairment in the past but have since recovered (such as cancer or mental health issues).

AVPB supports the social model of disability that states that disability is created by society's barriers and not by particular medical conditions or impairments. Removing these barriers, which disable people who have impairments, can therefore reduce disability.

Barriers can be:

- Prejudice and stereotypes
- Inflexible organisational procedures and practices
- Inaccessible information
- Inaccessible building
- Inaccessible transport

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 AVPB Board's responsibility is:

- To own and monitor implementation of this policy, and to ensure it is reviewed every three years

- To designate a board member (or other person) to be the contact person when someone wants to report a breach of this policy
- Approve the Equality Action Plan and oversee its implementation
- Respond to allegations of discrimination and harassment fairly, quickly and effectively
- Investigate and deal promptly with any incidents or individual behaviours that contravene this policy

6.2 AVPB Operations Committee is responsible for:

- Delivery of this policy
- Providing strong leadership on equality
- Driving delivery of the Equality Action Plan
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are fully aware of their individual and collective responsibilities under this policy.

6.3 AVPB's staff, volunteers and any consultants are responsible for:

- Acting as equality champions and role models
- Implementing this policy and integrating equality into the work of AVPB
- Playing their part in creating an environment where people are valued and respected
- Prioritising attendance at equality training
- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Reporting discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment or harassment that they experience or witness
- Helping identify discriminatory practices or procedures and bringing these to the attention of the appropriate person or body
- Contributing to creating an inclusive learning environment that values difference
- Attending mandatory training and development events
- Expressing opinions constructively with sensitivity and respect.

6.4 Our service providers', contractors' and consultants' responsibility is to operate within the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the terms of this policy. A copy of the Equality Policy will be given to all contractors and consultants and an assessment of their commitment to complying will form part of any formal tendering process.

7. Monitoring and Implementation

7.1 Ultimate responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy rests with the AVPB Board of Trustees. However each and every individual involved in AVPB needs to play their part in translating policy into practice.

7.2 On a day-to-day basis breaches of this policy could occur at a number of levels some requiring a more urgent response than others

7.3 If staff or volunteers find examples of indirect discrimination in AVPB policies and procedures they should bring this to the attention of the appropriate person or body.

7.4 Should staff or volunteers experience or witness more severe breaches of this policy, perhaps involving direct discrimination against an individual or bullying and harassment, then they should do their best to mitigate the breach at the time (for example by talking to the person involved and reminding them of this policy). They should then report the incident to the member of the Board designated as having responsibility for this policy, or any other Board member as appropriate.

7.5 AVPB will take action where needed to address any issues that arise.

Approved by Trustees June 2018
Next scheduled review: September 2018