

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way the Matthew Project works. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people. As an organisation we recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference for our clients.

We seek to develop a work environment where we treat all employees as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010* by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination. We will remove unnecessary barriers for our employees seeking opportunities through training and development, promotion and career planning.

We will continue to support our leaders, managers and employees to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in their everyday activities, roles and functions.

Andy Sexton
Chief Executive Officer

* This refers to the protected characteristics of sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This is a non-contractual policy

Created: September 2021
 Review date: September 2023
 Approved by CEO & Board Trustees

1. Purpose

This policy sets out our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.

We aim to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development of employees, and in pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Matthew Project

We consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all.

We consider diversity to mean valuing and respecting differences between the individuals that are part of our organisation.

We consider inclusion to be when people feel valued and accepted in their team and in the wider organisation, without feeling uncomfortable in following the Matthew Project's standards. We support employees, regardless of their background or circumstance, to thrive at work.

We acknowledge that equality, diversity and inclusion are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

3. Scope

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees.

All employees have a personal responsibility for the application of this policy. It is also of particular relevance to line managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

4. Matthew Project Commitment

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality, inclusion and respect for all. We will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, because of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010):

- sex
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion and or belief including philosophical belief
- age.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities. Selection for promotion will be based on aptitude and ability. Selection for training or any other benefit will be on the basis of the role requirements.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide as an alternative to raise the matter through the Dignity at Work Policy or Grievance Policy. For types of discrimination see the Appendix to this policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. We will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by us as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be handled under our Disciplinary Policy.

A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy.

Employees may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they could be sued by the victim.

5. How Does this Policy Apply?

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events, social media and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on our reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to the Matthew Project). Please read the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy in conjunction with this policy.

Some specific areas of application:

a) Recruitment and Promotion

Selection for employment will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Further detail is set out in our Recruitment & Selection Policy. Where possible we will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of our recruitment processes to help promote good practice.

All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.

b) Training

You may be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.

c) During Employment

The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

Policy Implementation

In order to translate this policy into action we will;

- train our employees to carry out this policy and embed equality principles into all relevant training including induction
- identify and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals
- 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 effectiveness of this policy in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- We are working on improving our training offer and encouraging staff to be active allies.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by us to assess its effectiveness and may be amended from time to time.

Appendix - Types of Discrimination

There are various types of discrimination prohibited by this policy. The main types are defined here.

1) Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic set out in this policy. By way of an example, refusing to promote a pregnant employee on the basis that they are shortly due to go on maternity leave would be direct discrimination on the protected characteristic of the employee's sex. Other types of direct discrimination are:

- **Associative Discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, an employee is discriminated against because their child is disabled.

- **Perceptive Discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. For example, where co-workers believe the individual is gay. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

2) Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied, which appears to be the same for all, but which has a disproportionate, adverse effect on one group of people. This is discrimination even though there was no intention to discriminate. For example, a requirement for UK based qualifications could disadvantage applicants who have obtained their qualifications outside of the UK; this could amount to indirect discrimination on the grounds of race.

3) Victimisation

Victimisation is where an employee is treated less favourably than others because they have asserted legal rights against the organisation or assisted a colleague in doing so. For example, victimisation may occur where an employee has raised a genuine grievance against us and is demoted as a result.

4) Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant 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.” It is important to remember that it is not the intention of the harasser but how the recipient perceives their behaviour, which determines whether harassment has occurred. Please see the Dignity at Work Policy, for further details of how the organisation will deal with bullying and harassment.