Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This is a non-contractual policy

Reviewed: April 2026
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Approved by CEO & Board Trustees

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (the "Policy") sets out the Matthew Project's ("TMP") approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion. TMP is committed to promoting equity and diversity and promoting a culture of belonging and respect that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way it works, in line with TMP's values and ethos.

TMP is an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment and volunteering, including in the recruitment, training and development of employees and volunteers, and in pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

Policy Scope

This Policy applies to all employees and volunteers ("Workers").

Workers have a personal responsibility for the application of this Policy. It is particularly relevant to those who are involved with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

Policy

The Matthew Project recognises that:

- Equity means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring there is fairness and impartial treatment for all.

- Diversity means valuing and respecting differences between the individuals that are part of the organisation.

- Inclusion is when people feel valued and comfortable in following TMP's standards. TMP supports Workers, regardless of background or circumstances, to thrive in the workplace.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equity of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

TMP's Commitment

TMP is committed to ensure that:

- Every Worker is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equity, inclusion, and respect for all.

- TMP will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against a Worker 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, and age.

- Workers will be encouraged to develop skills to fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development, and progression opportunities. Selection for progression will be based on aptitude and ability. Selection for training or any other benefit will be based on employment/volunteer role requirements.

- No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

  If an employee believes they have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, they should first consider the feasibility of an informal resolution by discussion with their line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority. An alternative approach is to raise the matter through the Dignity at Work Policy or Grievance Policy (see the Appendix for the main types of discrimination).

  If a volunteer believes they have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, they should raise the issue with their line manager or the HR and Volunteer Officer. Although volunteers do not have an employment contract with TMP, they will be treated with the same respect and consideration as employees in these matters.

- Allegations regarding potential breaches of this Policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by TMP 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 (for employees) and in the case of volunteers, will be handled with similar considerations as employees.

- An employee who is found to have breached this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action under TMP's Disciplinary Policy.

- A volunteer who is found to have breached this Policy may be subject to similar investigations as set out in TMP's Disciplinary Policy, which could lead to the termination of their Volunteer Agreement.

- Workers may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this Policy, meaning that they could be sued by the victim.

- TMP will regularly review this Policy to assess its effectiveness and to identify any need for amendment.

Policy Application

This Policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and conduct outside of the workplace that is related to working for or representing TMP (e.g. at meetings, social events, social media and social interactions with colleagues and clients) or which may impact on TMP's 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).

Specific areas of application:

Recruitment and Promotion of Employees
Selection for employment will be based on 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 based on 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.

Selection of Volunteers
Selection of volunteers will be based on aptitude and ability. Where possible, TMP will capture potential volunteers' diversity demographics as part of the selection processes to help promote good practice.

Training and Development
Workers will be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this Policy; this will also include refresher training, when required.

During Employment and Volunteering
The benefits, terms and conditions of employment/volunteering and facilities available to Workers 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

To facilitate the implementation of this Policy, TMP will:

- Train Workers to apply this Policy and embed equity principles into all relevant training, including induction.
- Identify and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled Workers and clients.
- Communicate this Policy to all TMP's stakeholders so that they are aware of TMP's commitment to treat them fairly and their obligation to operate in line with this Policy.
- Take appropriate action when incidents occur which breach the Policy.
- Regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of this Policy in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Assess its supporting action plan/policies and how it works in practice, reviewing it regularly with reference to TMP's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.
- Work on improving training and encourage Workers and stakeholders to be active allies.

Appendix - Types of Discrimination

There are various types of discrimination prohibited by this Policy; the main types are defined as:

Direct Discrimination
Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic set out in this Policy. For example: refusing to promote a pregnant employee on the basis that they are shortly due to go on maternity leave - this 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.

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.

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 an organisation and is demoted as a result.

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 TMP's Dignity at Work Policy for details on how it will deal with bullying and harassment.