



<b>Document Control</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</b>
<b>Version:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>HR-001</b>
<b>Scope:</b>	
<p>This policy applies to all contracted and non-contracted employees, volunteers, trustees, and potential employees, volunteers, and trustees of <b>The Anthony Seddon Fund</b>. This policy applies equally to all areas of employment, including recruitment, selection, promotion, training, development, discipline, grievance, sickness, absence, conditions of service, and reasons for termination of employment.</p>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	
<p>The purpose of this policy is to ensure that The Anthony Seddon Fund is compliant with the statutory duties under the <b>Equality Act 2010</b> and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.</p>	
<b>Supersedes:</b>	
<p>HR-001 – Equality &amp; Diversity Policy – V4</p>	
<b>Version Changes:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarity and Accessibility:</b> Revisions were made to improve the clarity and accessibility of the policy, ensuring that it is easily understandable and actionable by all trustees, staff, volunteers, and customers.</li> <li>• <b>Integration of Digital Accessibility:</b> Introduced a "Digital Accessibility" section to address the accessibility of digital platforms, ensuring compliance with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.1 level AA. This includes details on web and mobile accessibility, staff training on creating accessible content, regular audits, and feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.</li> <li>• <b>Updated Reporting Mechanisms:</b> Expanded the "Reporting Discrimination or Potential Discrimination" section to include detailed internal and external reporting procedures.</li> </ul>	

**Next Review Date:**

March 2025

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## 1. Introduction

**The Anthony Seddon Fund** recognises and values people's differences and will assist them in using their talents to reach their full potential. The organisation will do all it can to ensure it recruits, trains, and promotes people based on experience (both lived and practical) and abilities for all roles within the organisation. This is applicable to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and customers.

This policy is designed to ensure that **The Anthony Seddon Fund** complies with its obligations under equality legislation (namely the **Equality Act 2010**) and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.

**The Anthony Seddon Fund** is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (defined as "protected characteristics"). Cases of discrimination will be dealt with fairly, confidentially, and in accordance with the appropriate organisational policies. This list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed in light of future reviews of the policy.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Equality & Diversity Policy is to ensure that The Anthony Seddon Fund upholds and promotes principles of fairness and respect in all aspects of its operations. The policy is designed to ensure that all trustees, staff, volunteers, and customers are treated equitably and without discrimination, underpinning our commitment to fair and objective employment practices.

### Key Objectives

- **Equitable Treatment:** To guarantee that all trustees, staff, volunteers, and customers are treated fairly and with mutual respect at all times. Our organisation aims to create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.
- **Freedom from Harassment:** To ensure a safe and positive environment free from harassment, bullying, or any other form of unwanted behaviour. Such behaviour may arise from colleagues, service users, or external third parties and will not be tolerated.
- **Opportunity and Potential:** To provide all individuals associated with The Anthony Seddon Fund—irrespective of their protected characteristics or perceived characteristics—the opportunity to contribute and achieve their full potential. This commitment helps foster a diverse and capable workforce.
- **Non-Discrimination:** To protect individuals from discrimination related to association with another person who possesses a protected characteristic or because others perceive them to have a particular protected characteristic,

even if they do not. This ensures fairness in treatment for all, regardless of direct or indirect connections to protected traits.

- **Diversity Appreciation:** To value and embrace the variety of views, outlooks, and approaches that a diverse workforce brings. This diversity enriches our organisation, enhancing the services we provide and increasing our understanding and responsiveness to our customers' needs.
- **Justifiable Practices:** To ensure that no individual receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by practices or conditions that cannot be objectively justified. We strive to maintain transparency and fairness in all our policies and practices.

By implementing this policy, The Anthony Seddon Fund commits to continuous review and improvement of our practices to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and demonstrate our dedication to treating people equally and fairly. This policy is not only a reflection of our statutory duties but also of our moral and ethical responsibility to our community and stakeholders.

### 3. Definitions

#### Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristics covered in the **Equality Act 2010** are:

- Race.
- Gender.
- Disability.
- Sexual Orientation.
- Religion or Belief.
- Age.
- Gender Reassignment.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership.
- Pregnancy and Maternity.

#### Prejudice

Prejudice is the act of judging without sufficient information. It is the formation of a view without consideration of facts or arguments and the holding of an unfavourable opinion and unreasonable feelings formed beforehand without knowledge, thought, or reason. To be prejudiced ultimately means an individual having a closed mind in the area concerned with their pre-judgement.

#### Direct Discrimination

It occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

- **Discrimination by Association:** This is direct discrimination against another because they associate with someone who possesses a protected characteristic.

- **Discrimination by Perception:** This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### **Indirect Discrimination**

Where a working condition, practice, or rule disadvantages one group of people more than another. In other words, it is more difficult for people from one group to comply with the requirement. Even if it is done accidentally, indirect discrimination is unlawful. Indirect discrimination is only permissible if it is necessary for the way the business works and there is no other way of achieving it.

### **Discrimination Arising from Disability**

Where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability that cannot be objectively justified. This only applies where the organisation knew, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person was disabled.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for an individual.

- **Third Party Harassment:** This is where a trustee, staff member, or volunteer is harassed by a third party who is not part of the organisation. The organisation becomes liable if it has happened on at least two occasions when it is aware that it took place and has not taken steps to prevent it from happening again.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated unfairly as a result of filing a complaint or raising a grievance under the **Equality Act of 2010**.

## **4. Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties**

While the Trustee Board of **The Anthony Seddon Fund** has ultimate responsibility for the policy's effective implementation, staff and volunteers all share responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that this policy is implemented in practice.

Trustees, staff, and volunteers of **The Anthony Seddon Fund** have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed, and draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Breaches of the **Equality and Diversity Policy** by trustees, staff, or volunteers may jeopardise their position in the organisation.

While the organisation is potentially liable for any discriminatory acts carried out by its trustees, staff, or volunteers, the individual who carries out the discriminatory act can also be personally liable under equality legislation.

## 5. Equal Opportunities in Practice

In complying with the policy, the organisation will carry out the following actions:

- Use criteria that do not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and promotion procedures.
- Require entry to trustee, staff, or volunteer status based on merit.
- Not discriminate in opportunities for recruitment or training for trustees, staff, and volunteers.
- Ensure that every individual is assessed according to his or her personal capability to carry out a given job or role.
- Ensure that all trustees, staff, and volunteers are given equal treatment with regard to terms and conditions, provided they do the same or broadly similar work or work of equal value.
- Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the operation of complaint procedures.

Particular attention will be placed on the following:

- Ensuring that all relevant requirements of the **Equality Act 2010** in relation to disability are met and adhered to. This will include making reasonable adjustments to ensure access to individuals for trustees, staff, and volunteer tasks and opportunities.
- Ensuring that any amendments to any legislation relating to discrimination are met and adhered to.

## 6. Implementation of the Policy

All trustees, staff, and volunteers will work together to foster an environment of equality and diversity.

### Communications

Communication of the policy by trustees, staff, and volunteers will be achieved by:

- Making a copy of the policy available to prospective applicants.
- Ensuring all new starters have the opportunity to discuss the policy with trustees and colleagues.
- Making use of team meetings to discuss the policy and define areas where practice could be improved.
- Providing equality and diversity training and guidance to trustees, staff, and volunteers.

- Including reference to abiding by the policy in trustee, staff, and volunteer terms and conditions or agreements.
- Incorporating specific responsibilities into job or role descriptions.

### **Working with Partners**

In selecting our partners, we will consider their commitment to equality and diversity by:

- Asking to see their policy.
- Asking what they do in practice, including monitoring the policy.

### **Users of the Services**

We will make our services accessible by:

- Using appropriate formats for promotional material.
- Appropriate use of language, formats, fonts, and size.
- Make the information available in alternative formats.
- Promote or advertise our services in suitable locations.
- Monitor the accessibility of the locations from which the service is provided.

### **Monitoring the Policy**

This policy will be monitored to determine to what extent it is working and to identify areas for improvement. Monitoring will relate to both trustees, staff, and volunteers. The methods used will include:

- Information on how people heard of the services or accessed the services.
- Elements of the service used by people.

## **7. Digital Accessibility**

The Anthony Seddon Fund commits to ensuring all digital services, including websites and online resources, are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. We adhere to WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.1 level AA to ensure our digital content is accessible.

### **Key Strategies**

- **Web and Mobile Accessibility:** Ensure all digital platforms are intuitive and compatible with assistive technologies like screen readers and magnification software.
- **Staff Training:** Provide ongoing training for staff on creating and managing accessible digital content.
- **User Feedback:** Implement a feedback mechanism for users to report accessibility issues, facilitating quick resolutions and continuous improvement.
- **Regular Audits:** Perform regular accessibility audits of our digital platforms, conducted by internal and external experts, to maintain compliance and address any identified issues.

- **Inclusive Design:** Incorporate inclusive design principles in the development of new digital services, involving diverse user groups in testing to enhance accessibility and usability.

## 8. Reporting Discrimination or Potential Discrimination

The Anthony Seddon Fund is committed to maintaining an environment free from discrimination. This section outlines the processes for addressing and resolving incidents of discrimination, ensuring all parties know how to proceed if they encounter or witness discriminatory behaviour.

### Internal Reporting Procedures

#### For Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers:

- **Initial Reporting:** Any trustees, staff, or volunteers who believe they have experienced discrimination should promptly report the matter to the Chief Operating Officer (COO). This is to ensure that the issue is addressed swiftly and sensitively.
- **Escalation:** If the complaint involves the COO or if the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of the matter, the next step is to inform the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. If the complaint involves the Chairperson or if further escalation is needed, external advice and support will be sought to ensure an unbiased resolution.

#### Handling Complaints Involving Senior Positions

- **External Advice:** In situations where senior leadership is involved, especially in sensitive cases, the organisation may seek external legal or professional advice to ensure fairness and maintain trust in the process.

### External Reporting Procedures

#### For Customers and External Parties

- **Utilising the HR-002 – Complaints Policy:** Customers or external parties who experience discrimination by any representative of The Anthony Seddon Fund should report their concerns via the HR-002 – Complaints Policy. This ensures that their grievances are handled in a structured and formal manner.
- **Harassment by Non-Staff:** Trustees, staff, and volunteers can also use this policy to report harassment or discrimination by someone not affiliated with the organisation.

### General Measures and Support

- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** The Anthony Seddon Fund will not tolerate harassment from anyone, whether within or outside the organisation, towards its trustees, staff, or volunteers. Appropriate actions will be taken to prevent any recurrence.



- **Witness Support:** If a trustee, staff member, or volunteer witness's behaviour they find offensive or discriminatory based on protected characteristics, regardless of whether it is directed towards them, they are encouraged to report these observations under the same procedures.

### **Confidentiality and Protection**

- **Safe Reporting Environment:** All reports will be treated with confidentiality and respect for the privacy of all individuals involved. The organisation ensures that individuals who make complaints in good faith will be protected from retaliation.

## **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains up-to-date and reflects the needs and practices of the organisation.

The policy may also be reviewed if legislation changes or if monitoring information suggests that policy or practices should be altered