



OPS003 Challengers Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

		Date	Amended by:
Issue	8	December 2024	Gen Dearman

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1. Inclusion and the scope of policy

At Disability Challengers (Challengers) we pride ourselves on being fully inclusive. Disability Challengers (Challengers) works to include all children, young people and adults from all backgrounds, religions or beliefs, colour, culture, ethnic or national origins, gender or impairments, within Challengers services. We are equally committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, and encouraging diversity, amongst our workforce and job applicants.

This policy is embedded in the principles of *DC001 The Challengers Approach* and will be seen in the everyday behaviour of all staff.

We believe that all children, young people and young adults have a fundamental right to enjoy play, leisure and new opportunities in an environment which is safe and happy. To do this **all Challengers staff teams work towards and maintain environments where all children, young people, and colleagues feel as though they belong.**

We promote a team approach where mutual respect is always practised and an open management culture where mistakes can be acknowledged and understood. We do not tolerate discrimination or rude or disrespectful behaviour from staff or the children and young people using the service. All colleagues are expected to lead by example, conducting themselves in accordance with this policy.

For the purposes of this policy the term 'colleagues' includes employees, casual workers, trustees and volunteers.

2. Discrimination

Discrimination is unlawful when it takes place on one of the following grounds (the protected characteristics):

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

Discrimination can take a number of forms:

- Direct discrimination is when someone is treated worse than someone else (or worse than someone else would be treated) because of a protected characteristic. For example, it would be direct discrimination if a manager excluded an employee from a training course because they are gay.
- It is also direct discrimination when someone is treated worse than someone else (or worse than someone else would be treated) because they associate with someone with a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic. For example, it would be direct discrimination if an employee ostracised a colleague because the colleague has a gay flatmate or because they think the colleague is gay.
- Indirect discrimination is when an apparently neutral practice or requirement disproportionately disadvantages people with a particular protected characteristic and cannot be justified by the needs of the business (as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim). For example, imposing a requirement that job applicants must speak fluent English

disproportionately disadvantages groups who are not native English speakers and would be unlawful unless it could be justified on genuine business grounds.

- It is also discrimination when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability and this cannot be justified by the needs of the business (as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim), or when the business fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person to alleviate the disadvantage(s) caused by the disability.
- Harassment is another form of discrimination. This includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. For further details, see our Handbook. Victimisation, i.e. retaliating against someone who has complained about discrimination or harassment, or who has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment, is also unlawful discrimination.

It is also unlawful discrimination to:

- treat a part-time worker worse than a comparable full-time colleague, unless that treatment can be justified by the needs of the business (as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim); and
- treat a fixed-term employee worse than a comparable permanent colleague, unless that treatment can be justified by the needs of the business (as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim).

Part-time workers and fixed-term employees should also enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

This policy applies to prohibit all forms of unlawful discrimination in the workplace (which for home and hybrid workers includes their home), outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

3. Our responsibilities and approach

Recruitment

We aim to ensure that job requirements and job selection criteria are clear and based only on what is required to get the job done effectively. We are a proud disability confident employer and follow safer recruitment policies.

Training, development & policies

All staff are expected to complete training which includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training at Induction, and an understanding and knowledge of the Social Model of Disability.

Staff will receive support from their line manager and Challengers training to develop skills through training or direct work which enable them to work safely and effectively with children and young people from every background and who have any impairment.

We have a number of policies to support our approach to inclusion, including policies for Expectant and New Mothers, Young Workers, and Menopause.

Disability

Staff will be encouraged to identify any issues or concerns or lack of confidence in working with children and young people from diverse backgrounds or with different impairments and to discuss these openly with their line manager. This way Challengers will be the safest, happiest and inclusive because the environment will foster the development of competency and appropriate skills. Trustees will be offered training opportunities in disability and diversity awareness.

4. Service Inclusion Statement

Challengers believes that every child and young person has the right to play and to have choices. Play and leisure is a fundamental part of all our lives. It is a chance to relax, to make friends and to develop as an individual. We know that families with disabled children very often have complex lives and that they often face isolation and exclusion. This means that disabled children simply don't have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

We are told that disabled children are excluded from other settings and providers.

Challengers will make provision, whether it is to provide training or extra staffing or some other solution, to make sure that someone who wants to come to a scheme is able to and feels included. We are determined that we will never exclude a child or young person no matter how complex that might be.

We believe that we need to be an inclusive organisation and our entire approach is based on the Social Model of Disability.

Disabled children need access to the same amount of normal play and leisure opportunities as others and society. We know through our work that to start doing so as young as possible is the answer, so we run an inclusive pre-school for disabled and non-disabled children where they learn and come to accept each other for the people they are. Our play and youth workers see the world very differently after working at Challengers and are driven to achieve inclusion both at and outside of work as a result.

So although at Challengers we are working towards increasing delivery for disabled children and young people as a priority, we are attempting to do this with an inclusive approach because we believe this should be the norm. Our vision is a world where all children and young people can play together, freely.

We found that some families are concerned about inclusion because they fear it will have a negative impact on their child's experience but conversely others believe it benefits everyone and should be encouraged. Inclusion means different things to different people, so it is important we are clear about what Challengers mean.

At Challengers, the starting point is always the individual child; what do we need to do to make sure they are included? To enable them to have a safe and happy day with us.

Challengers is committed to providing services for disabled children and young people who have fewer choices than their non-disabled peers. We believe that it is right to do so with an inclusive approach and unless we do then nothing will change. However, families can be confident we will continue to prioritise disabled children first until this is no longer necessary.

5. What to do if you have been discriminated against

If you believe you may have been discriminated against, please tell us. You can speak informally with your manager or anyone in HR. If you want to make a more formal complaint, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe there has been any bullying or harassment, then you should raise the matter.

6. Breaches of the policy

Allegations of potential breaches of this policy will be treated seriously. Individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.

Any member of staff who is seen to disadvantage, harass or discriminate against a child or a colleague will be subject to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy may constitute gross misconduct and as such may result in summary dismissal.

DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY				
Plan Version No.	Release Date	Summary of Changes	Section No./ Paragraph No.	Changes Made By
1	December 2011	Change of Quality Development Officer to Head of Quality and Compliance Change of layout		CEO
2	December 2014	Revision and update of detail throughout.		Jonathan Dobson, Head of Operations
3	August 2016	General review and addition of Inclusion Statement		Laura Sercombe CEO
4	March 2017	General review		Jonathan Dobson
5	August 2018	General review		Jonathan Dobson
6	March 2021	General review, updated in line with revised "Challengers Approach"		Paul Wilson Head of Service
7	August 2022	General review, especially section 6		Paul Wilson Head Of Service
8	Dec 2024	Addition throughout to include Challengers Team as a whole		Gen Dearman CEO

<https://disabilitychallengers.sharepoint.com/senior-management-team/shared-documents/policy-and-procedure-originals> - ORIGINALS - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE/OPERATIONS/OPS003 CHALLENGERS INCLUSION POLICY.DOCX