



BRIDGING
DEVELOPMENT GAPS

Diversity, equity and **inclusion Policy**

December, 2025

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

About this policy

Bridging Development Gaps (BDG) commits to treating all those we come into contact with fairly, with dignity and respect. We endeavour to ensure that our volunteers, staff and leadership do likewise. This policy:

- outlines our commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion in all our engagements with different individuals and groups;
- sets out how we put this commitment into practice;
- explains the behaviours we expect of people in support of this commitment; and
- sets out the key steps we take to make our culture as inclusive as possible, including our diversity and inclusion framework and how we ensure equality of opportunity throughout the employment lifecycle
- developed this policy to guide the organization.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone who works or engages with BDG, including external contractors we work with. It encompasses how we treat one another and how we treat the people who benefit from our services, projects, events and our suppliers.

The Equality Act 2010

This policy complies with the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Under the Equality Act, BDG is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), meaning the organisation as a whole and all of our colleagues, will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not
- foster or encourage good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

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Definitions

Phrase	Definition
Belonging	The feeling of being accepted for your authentic self.
Bullying	<p>Offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting conduct, or an abuse or misuse of power, which is usually persistent, and has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient.</p> <p>Bullying: can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, and is not necessarily face-to-face; and can happen over email, phone calls, online (cyber-bullying) or on social media, at work or outside work. If the bullying relates to a characteristic protected by law, it may also constitute harassment and be unlawful.</p>
Discrimination	<p>Less favourable treatment based on a person's actual or perceived protected characteristic(s) whether directly, or indirectly through policies and procedures that disadvantage the person. Discrimination may also be practised by association—for example, treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.</p>
Diversity	<p>The range of traits and characteristics that our staff and Trustees possess.</p> <p>Diversity can be understood in two ways: diversity of inherent characteristics—for example, race, gender, sexual orientation or disability; and diversity of acquired characteristics—for example, diversity of thought, communication style, language or social skills.</p>
Equal opportunities	<p>The principle that all employees and candidates are treated fairly and without discrimination, giving everyone the same chance to succeed based on their abilities and qualifications. This means that decisions related to hiring, promotion, training, compensation and other aspects of employment are made without bias or prejudice against protected characteristics.</p>
Equality	<p>All employees have equal access to opportunities, resources and fair treatment regardless of their protected characteristics. Equality in the workplace involves providing fair wages, equal opportunities for promotion and advancement, and a work environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.</p>
Harassment	<p>Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that happens on more than one occasion and has the purpose or effect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · violating someone else's dignity; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else. <p>Behaviour can be considered harassment even if it is unintentional: but it must be reasonably expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness.</p>
Inclusion	The practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised because of their inherent or acquired characteristics.
Intersectionality	The ways in which systems of inequality based on innate characteristics 'intersect' to create unique dynamics and effects.
Mobbing	See 'bullying'.
Protected characteristics	Human characteristics protected under anti-discrimination law. These characteristics may differ in each jurisdiction.
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and · treatment of a less favourable nature related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct. This conduct can be a one-time incident or repeated behaviour.
Victimisation	Treating someone detrimentally because that person has made a complaint of discrimination or harassment in good faith, or because they have supported someone else who has made such a complaint—for example, through a witness statement that supports the allegations.
World view	A holistic belief system which may have a religious or secular foundation. This includes, therefore, Humanism or Atheism. This does not include party affiliations or opinions about individual societal issues.

Introduction

1. At Bridging Development Gaps (BDG) our people are our most valuable asset. Each of us is unique, whether in terms of background, personal characteristics, experience, skills or motivations. We value our people for their differences. We believe the differences and diversity, are powerful.
 - 1.2. Fostering an inclusive culture helps each of us to benefit from a wider range of perspectives, experiences and skills. We believe that an inclusive culture creates a happier, more productive working environment for us all.
 - 1.3. Cultivating such a culture requires ongoing commitment and nurturing particularly because, in the wider world, areas of difference in a person or group often translate to biases, challenges and barriers that might not be faced by others. The more areas of difference, the more this effect can be compounded, as reflected by the concept of 'intersectionality'.
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Policy statement

EDI is a strategic priority with Board oversight of our activity and commitments in this area. We continuously monitor our progress to measure the success of our activities, including our people diversity demographics, recruitment, turnover, engagement, participation in EDI activity, and other related feedback.

1. The Charity is committed to providing an inclusive workplace that offers equal opportunities to all of our staff and Trustees. We believe that a culture of diversity, equality and inclusion benefits both our organisation and individual members of staff. Such a culture can help create a feeling of belonging that promotes staff wellbeing and enables effective working.
2. The Organisation is committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, integrity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
 - 2.3. In practice this commitment means we ensure that our engagement terms, as well as our recruitment, promotion and retention procedures, do not treat people more or less favourably because of inherent or other protected characteristics. The Organisation recognises all protected characteristics in the jurisdictions in which it operates. Specifically, as follows, irrespective of national discrimination laws:
 - (a) age;
 - (b) sex, gender, gender identity or gender reassignment status;
 - (c) sexual orientation;

- (d) marital or civil partnership status;
- (e) pregnancy, maternity, paternity or caregiver status;
- (f) disability or medical condition, including HIV/AIDS;
- (g) race, racial group, ethnic, regional or national origin, colour or nationality;
- (h) religion, beliefs or world view;
- (i) caste or socio-economic background;
- (j) veteran or military status;
- (k) trade union membership status; and
- (l) conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Any behaviours, words or actions, which are not in line with this policy, will not be tolerated and will be dealt with. This commitment also means that we will respond swiftly, sensitively and fairly to all reports of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimization.

Preventing discrimination

2.5. The Organisation will work to prevent discrimination in the workplace, including:

- direct discrimination*—treating someone less favourably because of an inherent characteristic compared with someone who does not have that characteristic. For example, choosing not to recruit someone because they are disabled in case, they ‘wouldn’t fit in’ with the team.
- a. *indirect discrimination*—maintaining policies, procedures and ways of working that put people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared with people who do not have that characteristic, without good reason. For example, holding a team working lunch in premises that serve alcohol, where some staff may not be able to attend for religious reasons.
- b. *associative discrimination*—treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example, because their partner is transgender.
- c. *discrimination by perception*—treating someone less favourably because you perceive them to have a protected characteristic even if they do not. For example, choosing not to promote someone because you mistakenly believe them to have caring responsibilities.
- d. *discrimination arising from disability*—treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with that person’s disability and where such treatment is not justified.

Examples include:

- (i) dismissing someone because of their disability-related absence.
- (ii) disciplining someone for losing their temper where such loss of temper was out of character and was due to severe pain caused by an illness.
- (iii) failing to make reasonable adjustments.

2.6. The Foundation is legally obliged in a number of jurisdictions to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or our premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failure to comply with these duties would be unlawful. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- (a) making physical modifications, for example, providing a wheelchair ramp;
- (b) swapping some of the disabled person's duties with a colleague;
- (c) changing their working hours or place of work;
- (d) adjusting procedures for assessing candidates; and
- (e) modifying disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment

2.7. Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment have a harmful and negative impact on Individuals and their dignity, and therefore run counter to this policy. Thus, the Foundation resolves to create a positive working environment free from bullying and harassment (see our 'Anti-bullying and - Harassment Policy—Global').

Behaviours

It is important that our people understand their rights and their individual accountability for helping us to achieve our vision for BDG. We expect everyone to embrace equality, diversity and inclusion by:

- respecting and valuing others, regardless of personal differences
- understanding the value that a diverse workforce brings with a range of qualities, backgrounds, and experiences
- constructively challenging or praising others to ensure our EDI vision is lived out as well as recognising unacceptable behaviour and taking appropriate action
- demonstrating an understanding of the policy and our strategic approach to EDI
- participating in developmental activities relating to EDI

Equality of opportunity

Recruitment and promotion

2.8. We take reasonable and appropriate steps to encourage job applications from as diverse a range of people as possible. Recruitment selection panels must not unfairly discriminate in any way.

2.9. Recruitment selection panels must challenge themselves and their peers, to make sure that any stereotypes, unconscious bias or prejudice do not influence recruitment decisions.

2.10. All decisions relating to a person's internal move, promotion, or career development must be free from discrimination.

2.11. We ensure that selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion are reviewed on a regular basis so that there is no discriminatory impact on a certain group.

Disability inclusion

- 2.12. To ensure that the Organisation provides equality of opportunity and inclusion for disabled people, whether their disability is visible, disclosed, invisible or undisclosed we are committed to:
- a. following fair recruitment practices;
 - b. making our offices and systems fully accessible to people with disabilities, and making reasonable adjustments to our policies, procedures, practices or employment terms where requested;
 - c. providing access to independent emotional and practical support via our employee assistance programme (see the intranet for more details or contact the HR team for details of our Employee Assistance Programme); and
 - d. helping our staff to create psychological safety for those with a disability (where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences) through the provision of regular diversity, equality and inclusion training to all staff (see section 5).

Roles and responsibilities for this policy

Day-to-day responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Responsibility for ensuring their own compliance with the policy.

Your responsibilities—What we expect from you

- 3.1. We expect you, and everyone covered by this policy, to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying this policy. Our culture is made in the day-to-day working interactions between us, so creating the right environment is a responsibility that we all share.
- 3.2. We expect you to treat your colleagues and third parties (including and not limited to, funders, partners, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants) fairly and with dignity, trust and respect. Sometimes, this may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and creating a welcoming space for others to contribute

We expect all our Team Members to inform themselves of the experiences and preferences of people who are different from them. We require our staff to act with empathy—the Foundation will not tolerate the use of offensive, negative or inappropriate language towards people with a protected characteristic. This requirement includes, most acutely, refraining from the use of ableist, sexist or racist terms or jokes. Psychological safety, where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences, is essential for ensuring inclusion, and this is not possible in a culture that

allows inappropriate teasing or 'banter'. We encourage you to speak up in defense of the rights of others and if you are concerned that others are not acting in line with this policy. If you do not feel confident in doing so, you can raise the matter with your manager or a member of the HR team. By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, you can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.

Any dealings that you have with colleagues or third parties must be free from any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying as covered in our Anti-bullying and harassment policy.

To safeguard against the impact of unconscious bias and discrimination we require all staff to follow the Foundation's processes for people management, particularly:

- (a) recruitment,
- (b) appraisals,
- (c) promotion, and
- (d) handling disciplinary and grievance procedures.

The HR operations team can advise you on required procedures and good practice as needed.

Breaches of this policy

- 4.1. If any of our staff or Trustees are found to have committed, authorised or condoned an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying, we will take action against them including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary policy and procedure. In some jurisdictions, the courts can hold you personally liable for discrimination and harassment. If you need further information, please speak to the legal team.
- 4.2. Members of staff who would like to report a breach of this policy should contact the EDI Lead. Third parties who would like to report a breach of this policy should email 'office@bdgaps.org'.

Learning and Development

To empower everyone to contribute to our EDI approach, we provide training and development opportunities for all colleagues to enhance confidence and knowledge about diverse identities and experiences and evolving best practice, language and behaviours. EDI resources and activities are shared and promoted regularly, providing further opportunities

Awareness and training

- 5.1. All staff must attend any mandatory diversity, equality and inclusion training provided to learn and increase awareness and understanding of EDI topics.

- 5.2.1 Furthermore, we expect all our people to proactively support the diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives which the Organisation will arrange from time to time, by attending these events to educate themselves on the challenges faced by others and how to help alleviate these in the workplace.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments are a tool to constructively assess whether we are having due regard to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in our decision making and can reduce risk and impact on resources. They help us make informed decisions and define what action we may need to take to mitigate impact or realise benefits. As an organisation, we will consider how our decision making is likely to impact different protected characteristic groups. In line with this, colleagues are expected to consider whether an Equality Impact Assessment is needed ahead of starting a new activity or make changes to an existing activity. By activity we mean any policy, process, strategy, project, event and/or technology which would represent a change to the current or standard way that we work. A screening tool is available which will help you to determine if a full Equality Impact Assessment should be completed ahead of an activity.

Review and Revision - Continuous improvement

7.1. This policy will be reviewed and updated at least every two years, and in line with requirements in BDG's Management Framework.

Policy information

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Registered charity Number 1203383

Adopted by Trustees of the Organisation on 19th December 2025