

Poole Communities Trust

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Implemented: August 2026

Last Review: July 2026

Next Review: July 2027

1 Purpose of this policy

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the work of Poole Communities Trust. We want to tackle social exclusion, inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

Our mission is to 'inspire change and help address disadvantage.'

Two of our values as a charity explicitly support equality:

'Compassionate towards others; we want to help protect each other from harm.'

'Inclusive; we embrace and promote difference.'

This policy sets out the commitments of Poole Communities Trust (PCT) to equality, diversity and inclusion across all its activities. It applies to all residents participating in PCT services and activities, volunteers, staff and trustees.

2 Policy Statement

PCT is opposed to all forms of discrimination and harassment both as a community charity which supports residents and as an employer. PCT will treat all people fairly and with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all. We will promote inclusion and eliminate all forms of discrimination or harassment on grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010, and other characteristics including:

- Age
- Disability, health including mental health
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief including non-belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Political beliefs
- Caring responsibilities

- Socio-economic status
- Unrelated criminal conviction

3 Definitions

Poole Communities Trust recognises and will not tolerate any type of discrimination, including:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by association:** discriminating against an individual because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- **Perception discrimination:** discriminating against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic, even if the person does not possess this characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination:** Poole Communities Trust will endeavour to not implement any condition, rule, policy or practice which applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** employees or volunteers can complain of any behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them or they do not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Poole Communities Trust will not tolerate the harassment of its staff, volunteers or residents.
- **Victimisation:** Poole Communities Trust will not subject any member of staff or volunteer to unfair treatment, disadvantage, or retaliation because they have made a complaint, raised a grievance, or supported someone who has done so.

4 Commitments

PCT commits to the following objectives across all its activities:

- Promote a supportive and welcoming environment in which all people are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation, harassment or discrimination is tolerated
- Provide and promote services that are accessible according to need, ensuring adjustments are made to enable inclusion
- Within funding restrictions, allocate resources fairly across the communities we serve
- Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in services and activities provided, volunteering, employment and development
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive relevant and appropriate training on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Work together with the community to provide accessible and relevant support that responds to residents needs

- Create effective partnerships with all parts of our community
- Carry out regular evaluation of services to ensure everyone in the community who would benefit from the services has equality of access, identifying and implementing improvements where required
- Ensure publicity materials, including our website and social media, utilise images inclusive of the diversity of the communities we support
- Ensure staff, volunteers and trustees are representative of the community served and that employment policies are fair and robust
- Respond to volunteers' and employees' individual learning and development needs where feasible and within available resources.
- Take lawful positive action to address the barriers faced by those experiencing discrimination by encouraging access and participation in services, volunteering and employment by under-represented groups
- Deal quickly and fairly with any reports of harassment or discrimination to staff, volunteers or residents.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are made aware, understand and implement this policy.

5 Enabling Inclusion

PCT aims to make its services and activities as accessible as possible:

We will ensure that:

- Fully accessible premises are used for meetings, training and other events.
- Issues of safety and timings of meetings are considered in planning processes.
- Travel costs are offered to volunteers needing to travel as part of their volunteering.
- Assistive hearing systems are offered (a Hearing loop is available at Bourne Community Hub)
- Audio /spoken alternatives and 'easy read' key documents can be made available
- Different needs are considered: religious or cultural, dependent responsibilities (e.g. child/parent care).

6 Employment of Paid Staff

Recruitment & Selection

- Recruitment and selection procedures will be run openly and fairly and advertised publicly except where redundancies are being proposed
- All jobs will have a job description and person specification, with no unjustifiable or non-essential experience, qualifications or conditions

- Job advertisements will be written in non-discriminatory language (except where there is a genuine occupational need as permitted by legislation)
- Application packs will include links to this policy, and application packs will include a monitoring form and a statement explaining the purposes of monitoring and the way in which the data will be managed and used
- Applications in formats appropriate for candidates with a physical or sensory impairment (e.g. tape will be welcomed)
- The composition of interview panels will be considered, and all panel members who have not previously been trained will be given training
- Adjustments will be made as needed for interviewing candidates with a physical or sensory or mental health impairment or learning disability,
- Recruitment and selection will be on merit by open and fair competition and will be conducted to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any of the grounds laid out in section 2 of this policy.
- Records will be kept of all interviews and their outcomes for a period of 1 month if applicants do not wish to be contacted in the future and 6 months if applicants wish PCT to keep their information on file.
- Having a criminal record may not prevent an individual being employed by PCT. Please see our Employment of Ex Offenders Policy. It will depend on the offences committed and the nature of the job. At interview or a separate meeting, we will provide discussion space for the disclosure of any offences or other issues that may be relevant to the post. Failure to reveal such information may lead to the withdrawal of a job offer or dismissal.
- All posts will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Our DBS Protocol outlines our procedure. We will discuss any matter revealed by this check before withdrawing any offer of employment.
- References will only be used to support or deny an appointment and will not be used to choose between candidates.

Conditions of Employment for Staff

Poole Communities Trust commits to:

- Equal pay, benefits and terms and conditions if they are performing equal work regardless of their sex
- Consider requests from staff for flexible working, whilst recognising that the majority of PCT roles are public facing, in line with the effective functioning of the Trust and the ACAS code of practice on requests for flexible working
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable a disabled member of staff to help them do their job, utilising appropriate guidance to support effective decision making
- Ensure all staff will receive line management support and supervision
- Ensure part time or fixed term workers are not treated less favourably

- Offer promotions on merit by open and fair competition and ensure no staff member receives less favourable treatment based on their protected characteristics
- Offering staff training and development in line with the requirements of their role and development needs as identified through supervision and appraisal processes
- Manage special leave requests (for example for religious observance) in line with this policy
- Ensure uniform or dress code requirements do not discriminate against any protected characteristics

7. Harassment & Bullying

Poole Communities Trust wishes to safeguard the welfare of employees and volunteers and to promote a working environment free from harassment and bullying.

Staff

Any employee who feels that they are being harassed or bullied by anyone associated with the Trust is actively encouraged to report this to the Charity Manager or a Trustee without fear of reprisal. Harassment and bullying in any form are contrary to this Policy, and are viewed as serious disciplinary offences, which could lead to dismissal.

Management and any staff with supervisory responsibility will ensure that all allegations of harassment and/or bullying are taken seriously and fully investigated.

If any employee feels that they have been subjected to harassment or bullying, they should use our 'Grievance Procedure'.

Volunteers

Any volunteer who feels that they are being harassed or bullied by anyone associated with the Trust is actively encouraged to report this to the Charity Manager or a Trustee without fear of reprisal. Harassment and bullying in any form are contrary to this Policy and are viewed as serious offences. If the harassment or bullying is from another volunteer, the Problem-Solving Policy will be used.

8. Monitoring

The Board of Trustees will receive an annual equality monitoring report.

This will include;

- Services, activities and events held which promote or support inclusion

- Any training undertaken to support the policy
- Any complaints related to discrimination or harassment from staff, volunteers or residents, actions taken in response and learning
- Protected characteristics information related to staff and volunteers will be monitored. Participation in activities by the community will also be monitored when 'sign up' is required.
- Equality, diversity or inclusion related feedback received from community members both formally, for example, through surveys or group discussions or informally
- Recommendations to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the policy statement and commitments set out above.

9.Complaints

Any complaints relating to this policy should be raised informally with the Charity Manager and then reviewed by the Chair of Trustees. Alternatively, complaints can be raised through the procedures outlined in our Grievance Procedure. Paid staff, trustees and other volunteers are encouraged to draw to the manager's attention any improvements that could be made to how this policy is being implemented.

Any residents or participants wishing to make a complaint should speak to the Charity Manager.

10.Procedure for dealing with breaches of this policy

- i) Paid employees: A serious breach of this policy by an employee may be grounds for disciplinary action (see Disciplinary Policy)
- ii) Trustees: A serious breach of this policy by a trustee may result in termination of membership and the removal from the Board of trustees, in line with the Code of Conduct
- iii) Volunteers: A serious breach of this policy by a volunteer may result in a volunteer being asked to leave, in line with our 'Problem Solving Policy'.
- iv) Residents: A serious breach of this policy may result in a resident being barred from using our services or joining our activities. This will only happen after discussions; support and all other reasonable steps have been taken.