

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Review Date: September 2027

1. Policy Statement and Legal Framework

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC is committed to promoting and valuing equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We aim to create an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where differences are recognised, valued and supported.

This policy is informed by and complies with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of the following Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We operate a **zero-tolerance approach** to discrimination in any form.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Farm Assistants
- Farm Assistants and visitors
- Families and carers
- Referrers, suppliers and visitors
- Anyone engaging with Dedham Therapy Farm CIC

It applies across all areas of activity, including recruitment, employment, training, therapeutic provision, service delivery, and governance.

3. Our Commitment

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC is committed to:

- Providing equal opportunities in employment and service provision

- Removing barriers to access and participation
- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- Creating an inclusive culture where everyone feels safe and valued
- Challenging discrimination, harassment and victimisation wherever it occurs

4. Understanding Discrimination

The following behaviours are prohibited and unlawful under the Equality Act 2010:

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages people with a particular Protected Characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.

Harassment

Including sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Treating someone unfavourably because they have made, supported, or are believed to have made or supported a complaint under this policy.

Disability Discrimination

Including:

- Unjustified less favourable treatment because of disability
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments

5. Staff Responsibilities and Training

Staff Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Challenging inappropriate language or behaviour
- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times
- Reporting discrimination, harassment or victimisation promptly

Managers and senior staff are additionally responsible for:

- Modelling inclusive behaviour
- Responding appropriately to concerns
- Ensuring fair decision-making
- Supporting reasonable adjustments

- Maintaining accurate records

Training and Awareness

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC ensures that:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion principles are covered during staff induction
- Staff receive ongoing training appropriate to their role
- Managers receive additional training on:
 - handling discrimination concerns
 - reasonable adjustments
 - legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010
- Policies are regularly communicated and accessible

6. Equality Objectives

To demonstrate our commitment and track progress, Dedham Therapy Farm CIC has set the following objectives:

1. **Training Completion**
All staff and volunteers to complete equality, diversity and inclusion training within induction and refresher cycles.
2. **Fair Recruitment and service access**
Recruitment and referral processes will be reviewed annually to ensure fairness, accessibility and inclusive practice.
3. **Monitoring and Learning**
Discrimination complaints and themes will be reviewed by management to inform training, policy updates and service improvement.
4. **Feedback gathering**

Equality, diversity and inclusion is included within Farm Assistant feedback gathering processes

Progress against these objectives will be reviewed annually.

7. Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment, promotion and selection decisions will be based on merit and objective criteria.

We will:

- Avoid discriminatory language in adverts
- Encourage applications from diverse backgrounds
- Use more than one person for shortlisting where possible
- Make reasonable adjustments throughout recruitment processes

8. Disabilities and Reasonable Adjustments

We encourage disclosure of disabilities so that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments can be considered.

For Farm Assistants accessing intervention:

- Referral forms and initial assessments support identification of adjustment needs
- Adjustments will be made to ensure equitable access to services

9. Breaches of This Policy

We take breaches of this policy extremely seriously.

All forms of discrimination, including but not limited to:

- Sexual harassment
- Harassment related to any Protected Characteristic
- Victimisation

constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal, in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure.

False allegations made will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under disciplinary procedures.

10. Reporting and Complaints

Concerns about discrimination, harassment or victimisation should be raised via:

- The Grievance Procedure
- The Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy

All complaints will be:

- Treated seriously
- Handled confidentially
- Investigated promptly and fairly

There must be no retaliation against anyone raising or supporting a concern.

11. Record-Keeping

Appropriate records will be kept relating to:

- Complaints
- Investigations
- Outcomes

Records will be stored securely and in line with data protection requirements.

Links to Related Policies

- [SEND Policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)