



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

The North Lincolnshire Youth Council (NLYC) believes that all NLYC members and the wider population are equal in status regardless of their race, nationality, ethnic or cultural origins, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, including non-belief, political belief, social class, employment status, low income, mental health, marital status and civil partnership, gender reassignment, HIV/AIDS status, appearance, refugee status, caring responsibilities and unrelated criminal conviction. Note that this list is not in any order of priority.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies 9 protected characteristics, some of which are included in the above list. The 9 characteristics are:

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

The NLYC is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and is committed to challenging them at every opportunity. The NLYC is committed to pursuing equality of opportunity for all and the NLYC will ensure fairness is built into all they do. All those involved in the work of the NLYC will be expected to promote equality at every opportunity, and will ensure that no-one is treated unfairly or is discriminated against. All those working with the NLYC will be expected to challenge any forms of prejudice or discrimination.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

The NLYC recognises and will not tolerate any type of discrimination:

- **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:** The NLYC 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 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. The NLYC will not tolerate the harassment of its members or supporters by other people
- **Victimisation:** The NLYC will not treat any member or supporters badly who have made a complaint or raised a grievance

## 3 RESPONSIBILITIES

- The NLYC will follow the requirements and guidance (including amendments) contained in all relevant equality and discrimination legislation and regulations in our work
- The NLYC recognises the right to dignity and respect of every person the organisation has contact with
- Every possible step will be taken to ensure the implementation of this policy – no-one seeking to engage with the NLYC will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable
- Implementation of this policy is an on-going process. Responsibility for the day-to-day implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Policy rests with the Participation Team as the lead support mechanism, but all members of the NLYC have a personal responsibility to accept, follow, implement and promote this Policy and to do everything they can to ensure that it works in practice.
- Council staff working with and for the NLYC will be responsible for upholding the following Equality Act Public Sector Duties:

The general duty is set out in section 149 of the Act (reproduced at Annex 1). In summary those subject to the Equality Duty must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

### **3 POSITIVE ACTION**

The NLYC believes that passive support for equal opportunities is not enough to combat discrimination and will take positive action to address the barriers faced by those experiencing discrimination:

- recognising and developing potential which has not been used before because of past discrimination and disadvantage
- encouraging access and participation in our services from under-represented groups
- providing training for disadvantaged groups and individuals

The NLYC is committed to:

- working in an anti-discriminatory manner (e.g. anti – racist, anti-sexist etc.)
- promoting a supportive and welcoming environment in which all persons are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation, harassment or discrimination is tolerated
- actively promoting and implementing this policy throughout all its work
- requiring all members to respect and support the principle of this policy
- recognising and fulfilling all legal obligations under the anti-discrimination legislation and associated codes of practice
- complying with the council's equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- providing relevant training, information, advice and resources to NLYC members and supporters on working in an anti-discriminatory way
- taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- listening to the voices of NLYC members and other individuals/groups from the community who are experiencing discrimination
- conducting elections and voting that ensures selection on merit (skills, experiences, aptitude etc)

- ensuring decisions on the operation of our contracts, services, training or any other benefit will be made objectively, without unlawful discrimination, and based on aptitude and ability
- dealing quickly and fairly with any accusation of harassment or discrimination

## **4 THE POLICY**

The NLYC recognises the importance of equal opportunity to our whole effectiveness, and it has in place its constitution and associated documents including other policies and procedures, which should be viewed alongside this policy. All NLYC policies are intended to reinforce the basic principles of equal opportunities.

All new members and supporters will be provided with a copy of this policy.

This policy covers:

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Membership of the NLYC
- Service delivery
- Access and premises
- Employment of support workers
- Publicity
- Complaints

### **4.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis at the NLYC Annual General Meeting to assess its effectiveness and any need for amendment to reflect new legislation/good practice issues.

We will monitor complaints, compliments and incidents. We will also reach out to community groups and other hard to reach groups in order to improve our approach to equalities. This information will be reported back and discussed at meetings and events as required.

### **4.2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE NLYC**

Membership of NLYC shall reflect the diversity of the local community it serves. We will undertake a diversity audit on an annual basis to understand the representativeness of the NLYC, though membership will be monitored regularly and if necessary measures taken to address any under-represented groups.

More information regarding member roles, elections of named roles, training and support are contained within the NLYC Constitution.

### **4.3 SERVICE DELIVERY**

The NLYC is committed to equality of opportunity for all its members. Where appropriate, we will develop projects, workstreams and target resources in order to be responsive to communities and groups in greatest need and/or facing discrimination.

### **4.4 ACCESS AND PREMISES**

As far as possible and reasonable given our resources, the NLYC will try to ensure that meetings and events are held in premises which are accessible to the communities we want to engage with. The NLYC will strive to make improvements to enable access and encourage participation. As part of this, the NLYC will take into account:

- Issues of safety and timings of meetings
- Travel costs
- Support aids such as advocates, carers, buddies
- Written information is made available in other formats as appropriate such as easy read, larger print or different coloured paper
- Hearing aid devices such as loop systems will be employed when available
- Different needs are taken into account such as religion, language or cultural requirements

### **4.5 EMPLOYMENT OF SUPPORT WORKERS**

NLYC members will be involved in the recruitment process for all members of the Participation Team.

NLYC members will also be encouraged and supported to engage in recruitment processes for other support workers linked to the NLYC and other positions in the council and wider organisations.

As part of this, arrangements for recruitment processes and support for NLYC members (and other voice representatives) are outlined in the 'Involving Service User in Recruitment Processes Policy'.

### **4.6 PUBLICITY**

In all publicity and information materials, including electronic versions developed and used by us, the NLYC will try to ensure that:

- clear direct language is used and if jargon is necessary it is explained

- positive images of a wide range of groups are used
- advertising will be placed in a variety of settings in order to reach as many different sections of the local community as possible
- materials will be produced in different formats when requested
- any material to be considered discriminatory will not be used
- proactively target/visit specific disadvantaged groups/areas of the community to inform them of the NLYC and wider young voice activities

#### **4.7 COMPLAINTS**

Any complaints relating to this policy, poor practice or non-enforcement should be raised informally with the support workers. NLYC members are encouraged to make suggestions about any improvements that could be made to the policy.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the NLYC Constitution and the associated documents, which includes the Code of Conduct and refers to possible sanctions if NLYC members' behaviours are not in line with the values of the NLYC.

#### **5 REVIEW**

Policy and Procedure adopted by NLYC in July 2018

Policy and Procedure Review date July 2019 (NLYC AGM)

If you would like any further information about our Equal Opportunities Policy, or there is anything you do not understand, or you want a copy, or need it in a different format please contact:

[young.voice@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:young.voice@northlincs.gov.uk)