



## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

**Reviewed by Board: September 2022**

**For review: June 2023**

### 1. Guiding Principles

The Aloud Charity is committed to promoting equality and diversity in its workplaces and during service delivery. It seeks to nurture a culture that values difference and recognises the benefit that people from different backgrounds and with different experiences can bring.

The charity seeks to create, maintain and promote a community in which each person is treated fairly and equally irrespective of their age, disability, gender identification, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

The Aloud Charity is fully committed to sustaining positive and mutually supportive working environments free from harassment, discrimination, bullying and victimisation, where staff, freelancers, volunteers, and participants can work collaboratively and productively together, and where all are equally valued and respected.

Our aim is that our work is reflective of the communities we serve and that all those who work with us feel respected, valued and supported to thrive.

The Aloud Charity has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to discrimination of any kind.

### 2. Equality of Employment

The Aloud Charity is committed to valuing diversity and seeks to provide those who work with us with the opportunity for employment, career development, and personal development based on ability, relevant qualifications, experience and suitability for the work, as well as their potential to be developed into the role.

We believe that people from different backgrounds and with different lived experiences can bring fresh ideas, thinking and approaches, which make our work more inclusive, effective, and representative of the communities of Wales.

The Aloud Charity welcomes **applications for employment and volunteering** from people of all backgrounds. The principles of fair and open competition apply to all roles. A strict selection process for interview is followed, solely based on the criteria outlined in the Job Description

and Person Specification. All **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Data** that is collected is filed anonymously in a different folder when applications are submitted and does not form any part of the selection process. References are requested from all successful candidates to provide assurance of suitability for the role.

All staff are entitled to **equal pay and conditions** for work of equal value. Pay reviews are carried out annually and any increases are made at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. This happens at the time they adopt the annual budget or review the functions of a specific role.

The Aloud Charity **will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination** against any person on grounds of age, disability, gender identification, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or socio-economic background in the fields of pay and benefits; terms and conditions of employment; dealing with grievances and discipline; dismissal; redundancy; leave for parents; requests for flexible working; selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities. The Staff Handbook outlines in more detail our approach to these areas.

### **Employment checks**

Prospective employees will not be asked to disclose convictions which are spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, unless the position is exempt from Section 4(2) of the Act. It should be noted that the majority of opportunities are exempt because they involve working with children and young people.

Failure to disclose convictions will result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Having an unspent conviction is not necessarily a bar to employment with The Aloud Charity. Criminal records will be taken into account only when the conviction is relevant to the role.

All employees are required to undergo a DBS check at the level appropriate to their role. These will need to be updated regularly in line with the most recent guidelines. Any unsatisfactory results are likely to lead to dismissal.

### **3. Working environment**

The Aloud Charity seeks to create a working environment that is **free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination**. It aims to promote dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

Our approach to Equality and Diversity will be outlined to staff as part of their **induction**.

During their time with us, staff and volunteers will be provided with the **training and development** they need to carry out their job effectively. Concerns about performance will be dealt with based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010)

The Aloud Charity is committed to providing all **reasonable assistance** to employees who are or who become disabled, making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to provide continued employment. An appropriate risk assessment will be carried out and appropriate specialist advice will be obtained when necessary.

The Staff Handbook outlines in more detail our approach to **flexible working**.

### **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all staff, freelancers and volunteers in their daily actions, decisions, and behaviour to adhere to these principles, to comply with all relevant legislation and to ensure that they do not discriminate against colleagues, participants and their families, suppliers, customers, or any other person associated with the charity. In addition to this, staff, freelancers, and volunteers are actively encouraged to raise any concerns they have if they experience or witness any form of bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Individuals should understand that they, as well as the charity, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 is a criminal offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

Formal procedures for dealing with **grievances and misconduct** are outlined in the Staff Handbook. Serious allegations that are found to be true could lead to individuals being dismissed without notice.

## **4. Equality of Services**

The Aloud Charity is committed to making our services as accessible and inclusive as possible.

All people who access our activities will be valued and treated with respect irrespective of ability, age, disability, gender identification, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

All services delivered by The Aloud Charity for young people will be **appropriate, accessible, and affordable** (where they are not free). Bursaries will be available as appropriate to make sure that an individual's financial situation is not a barrier to attend.

Every venue used by the charity to deliver activities will, as part of the selection process, consider physical access and quiet spaces. Our Rehearsal Information Sheet will outline the available access support, and this will be echoed on the website so that access information is readily available to participants, potential participants and their families.

### **A note on gender and gender identity**

The Aloud Charity recognises that its activities for those aged 11-20 outside of school are gender specific. We do this because we believe that it is important for boys and girls to have

their separate spaces to explore their musical talent, develop their musical skills and find their voice. We also know that there are plenty of opportunities for young people to sing in mixed gender groups outside of school. For many, being in a mixed gender environment is prohibitive and builds barriers to engagement. We want to build safe spaces that nurture young people to be themselves and so the ways in which we offer activities differs for boys and girls. This allows us to support young people in different ways, in regular consultation with them, to enable them to flourish.

We do however support access to anyone to attend the choir they most identify with. Our choir leaders and community leaders are trained to be discreet and supportive of all individual circumstance. Our aim is to be an inclusive, welcoming space that supports difference and belonging.

The Aloud Charity recognises that there are circumstances where having young people who identify as a different gender to others in the group may cause **safeguarding concerns**.

This is particularly relevant when activities involve changing before a concert or attending a residential. In these circumstances, we will work with the young people involved (and their parents/guardians as appropriate) to identify ways in which we can be inclusive without compromising our safeguarding responsibilities.

This might mean:

- Providing additional spaces for changing
- Making sure there are additional rooms available on residential
- Allocating a specific DBS checked adult to individuals to check and monitor toilet facilities
- Allocating a specific DBS checked adult as a support to individuals while on residential
- Using communal spaces for socialising before and after changing for events

## **5. Our Commitment**

In adopting this policy, The Aloud Charity will:

- Treat all staff, freelancers, volunteers, and participants in accordance with the policy
- Make sure no staff member, freelancer, volunteer, participant, potential participant, job applicant, visitor or guest receives any less favourable treatment based on any grounds linked to protected characteristics or other irrelevant difference
- Promote good relationships between staff, freelancers, volunteers and participants
- Not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
- Not tolerate acts that breach this policy
- Take seriously all breaches or alleged breaches
- Fully investigate promptly all allegations. Individuals involved in any allegation will be subject to suspension and / or disciplinary action where appropriate

- Take steps to ensure that unacceptable behaviour in the form of bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation is not repeated across the organisation
- Fully recognise its legal obligations under all relevant legislation and codes of practice
- Support staff and volunteers to use internal procedures in place to raise concerns about any breaches to the policy
- Not discriminate against staff raising a grievance or formal complaint for the duration of the investigation and beyond
- Ensure that staff understand and maintain their responsibilities under this policy
- Review other policies and procedures to ensure fairness, updating as appropriate at least annually
- Listen to staff, volunteers and participants and adapt behaviours and policies as appropriate to ensure that they are relevant, accessible and inclusive

This policy is underpinned by our Strategic Equalities Plan, which outlines steps for action to becoming a more inclusive organisation

## **Appendix 1: Definitions of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation**

### **Discrimination**

There are four kinds of illegal discrimination defined in the Equality Act 2010. They apply to service delivery and employment:

- Direct discrimination
- Combined direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from disability.

**Direct discrimination** – where a person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic. For example, not giving somebody a job or refusing to deliver a service to somebody because of their gender.

**Combined direct discrimination** – where a person is treated less favourably because of a combination of protected characteristics. For example, gender and age. The definition of direct discrimination has been extended to reflect case law. It now includes discrimination because of association with a person against whom it would be unlawful to discriminate. For example, discrimination against a parent of a disabled person. Direct discrimination is also extended to cover discrimination based on the perception of protected characteristics. For example, discrimination against a person who is believed to be a Muslim, even if they're not.

**Indirect discrimination** – when a policy or practice is apparently neutral but the effect places a group of people at a significant disadvantage. For example, an inflexible uniform policy that won't accommodate people's needs based on religion or disability.

**Discrimination arising from disability** – where a person is treated less favourably because of something related to their impairment. For example, a disabled pupil disciplined for not obeying a rule they didn't know about because they didn't understand the sign.

### **Bullying**

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying may not be deliberate – someone may demonstrate bullying behaviour without meaning to. It may be obvious, or it may be hidden. In every form, it's unwarranted and unwelcome and will often cause distress through embarrassment, humiliation or fear to the individual or group of individuals.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment now includes harassment based on association i.e., a friend of a disabled person, or perception i.e., mistakenly believed to be a Muslim etc. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity (where any unfavourable treatment may be considered discrimination) and marriage and civil partnership.

Harassment may consist of persistent behaviour, although one single act may be considered sufficiently serious to warrant formal or informal reporting.

**Sexual harassment** is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which violates the dignity of the harassed person, makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and/or creates a hostile or offensive environment.

Forms of harassment may include:

- Unnecessary or uninvited physical contact
- Serious assault of a physical or sexual nature
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, letters and so on
- suggestive remarks or innuendos
- visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags and emblems
- isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities
- being rejected or made to feel unwelcome
- coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following someone

## **Victimisation**

Victimisation is when a person subjects another person to detriment because they have done, or believed that they will do, a 'protected act.' A 'protected act' includes bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010, giving information or evidence, or making an allegation in relation to the Act, as long as they have done so in good faith – that is, done honestly.

More detail on Protected Characteristics can be found [here](#)