

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Positive Smiles C.I.C.

Document control

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2.6	Annual review, Positive Smiles rebrand and realignment to adult services	01/08/2026	31/07/2027	Shabir Siddiq

Positive Smiles is an equal opportunities organisation. It is our aim that there shall be equal opportunities within the company and in all the services we provide.

In particular, it is our intention that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, colour, race, disability, age, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion. Positive Smiles will also ensure that no discrimination occurs in relation to all of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

This policy celebrates difference while also framing our commitment to create an inclusive culture, where people can come to work being themselves and feeling a strong sense of belonging. We believe that a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture make us more effective in building strong partnerships and delivering positive impact for our participants and communities.

All staff and participants at Positive Smiles, including visitors, carers and volunteers, are covered by this policy.

This policy has regard for the following legislation, guidance and Positive Smiles policies:

- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary & Grievance Policy
- Safer Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

DEFINITION:

Equality

The term 'equality' means that everyone should be treated fairly. It recognises that everyone has individual needs and that they have the right to have their needs respected.

Diversity

The term 'diversity' has many definitions, but they all tend to embrace the notion that our background, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experiences are all different and that our differences should be valued and appreciated.

Inclusion

The term 'inclusion' is the overarching culture in which the mix of people can come to work, feel comfortable and confident to be themselves, and delivers the needs of Positive Smiles. Inclusion ensures that everyone feels valued and importantly, adds value.

Unconscious Bias

The term 'unconscious bias' describes how we are all shaped by our prior experiences and the social and cultural values that we absorb throughout our life. We all hold deeply ingrained assumptions and beliefs and create our own internal stereotypes.

Most people feel more comfortable around people like themselves (similar age, background or culture) and unconscious bias is a natural result of this, but it can cause unintentional prejudice. Unconscious bias can affect our behaviour in many ways, but if the bias is against a protected characteristic it could lead to illegal discrimination. It can affect recruitment, progression, recognition and much more. Types of unconscious bias are:

Affinity bias – Leads us to prefer people we feel a connection with.

Halo bias – Leads us to rate a person more highly overall because they have one single characteristic or achievement.

Horns bias – Leads us to not consider a person because of one quality that we don't like about them (opposite of halo bias).

AIM

Positive Smiles will strive to create a work culture that actively learns from diversity in order to strengthen the impact we seek to achieve. We recognise that people from different backgrounds and experiences bring valuable insights, diverse thoughts and a wealth of abilities.

An inclusive workplace culture is where you can come to work being the authentic version of yourself and feeling respected and valued. It is a culture supported by equal access to opportunities, a culture characterised by acceptance and a sense of

someone “having your back” and where the diversity of our team amplifies our ability to drive impact.

We also strive to create a work culture that builds on our passion for learning, our values and our ways of working.

A work culture that builds on a sense of belonging is where you can come to work feeling you are part of something bigger than yourself, and where the role of each of us serve to enable our goal, which is what connects us. Our passion for learning is what unites us, and our heritage is what shapes us.

At Positive Smiles, we celebrate differences and strive to create a strong sense of belonging, while retaining our core purpose that is firmly grounded in our vision and values.

EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect in October 2010. It consolidated and streamlined existing legislation and strengthened the law to support progress on equality.

The Equality Act 2010 details a list of ‘protected characteristics’ which are grounds upon which it is unlawful to discriminate against people. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief (or lack thereof)
- Pregnancy and maternity

Positive Smiles will seek to identify and act upon any unfair or unlawful discrimination which denies someone opportunities due to a protected characteristic.

Positive Smiles will provide reasonable adjustments, wherever possible, to remove any barriers due to disability, including providing alternative formats where needed.

POLICY STATEMENT

Positive Smiles is committed to equality of opportunity within a diverse learning and working environment. Positive Smiles will introduce policies and practices that support a working and learning environment free from bias and unfair or unlawful discrimination for all its staff, participants, associates and contractors. This is

communicated at induction and promoted regularly throughout the year during training sessions.

Positive Smiles is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity within a diverse environment for all its staff, participants and visitors and will ensure that its policies and procedures are equally applied and communicated to all.

Positive Smiles believes that individuals should be enabled to achieve their full potential in their role and career progression. This means by the provision of appropriate development opportunities and the removal of barriers to enable the achievement of optimum performance. Positive Smiles values the following:

- Mutual respect and sensitivity.
- Equality of access to the organisation, with equality of esteem and equality of opportunity within the organisation.
- Continuous improvement of individuals stemming from a culture of ongoing review, development, and enhancement.
- Satisfaction of individual needs via supportive and flexible working/learning environments.
- Encouragement of diversity of views, perspectives, values, and issues, but opposition to and eradication of prejudice, unfair barriers, and discrimination.
- Transparency, equity, responsiveness and accuracy of procedure and process.

PROMOTING EQUALITY

Positive Smiles aims to work closely with councils, local employers and voluntary and community organisations to promote social inclusion and race equality. Working in partnership will encourage and promote equality for everyone involved with Positive Smiles.

All Positive Smiles employees, volunteers and associates have a responsibility to comply with the intentions of this policy and will undergo training to support its implementation and effectiveness.

HOW YOU CAN BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

- **Direct discrimination** - is where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (perceptive discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (associative discrimination).
- **Indirect discrimination** - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone but put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.
- **Associative discrimination** - refers to discrimination based on an individual's association with another person belonging to a relevant protected group.

- **Harassment** - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them.
- **Harassment by a third party** - where the employer's action or inaction is related to a relevant protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** - treating someone unfairly because they have complained about discrimination or harassment.
- **Discrimination by perception** - Perceptive discrimination occurs when a person directly discriminates against another person because the person thinks they possess a particular protected characteristic. This applies even if the person being discriminated against does not have the protected characteristic.

If, following an investigation, it is found that an employee has maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint, they will not be protected under the Equality Act.

To implement the policy, we shall:

- Incorporate appropriate responsibilities and duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff.
- Provide equality training and guidance to our staff as appropriate, including training on induction as well as further on-going courses as identified via our internal management and review arrangements.
- Communicate, as appropriate, this policy to employees and all those associated with the services provided by Positive Smiles at outreach centres or other locations.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and consultants involved in designing and delivering our courses and activities comply with this policy, so that there are no unnecessary barriers to taking part for disabled people, for women or men, or for people from different racial groups. Where a course leads to a qualification through a partner or awarding centre, that organisation's rules also apply.
- Make every practical effort to ensure that materials, services and facilities are not only free from bias, but also support employees, associates and participants in making the most of employment and personal development opportunities.

Positive Smiles will comply with legislation relating to equality and diversity and with the requirements of our funders.

There should be no barriers to taking part in our activities based on:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation.

Positive Smiles considers how its programmes are promoted, delivered and reviewed to ensure that no barriers exist on any of the grounds listed above.

Reasonable adjustments are made so that disabled participants are not disadvantaged in any way. Participants are encouraged to tell us about their needs when they join, so that adjustments can be in place from the start. We also take account of any exceptional circumstances that may affect a participant.

EQUAL ACCESS AND DISCRIMINATION

While staff and participants are with Positive Smiles, we are determined to ensure that everyone has equal access to choices and opportunities for learning and personal or professional development. We aim to ensure that no one is discriminated against as a result of any action, intentional or otherwise, on the grounds of colour, racial, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion or belief or disability. Positive Smiles will take positive action to promote choice, opportunity and progression for its staff and participants and to adapt its arrangements to meet the needs of individuals and groups.

Action Planning: If incidents occur the following strategy will be followed:

- Identification of issue.
- Action to be taken.
- Deadline.
- Responsibility for achieving action.
- Resources.
- Performance measures.
- Review mechanisms.

MONITORING

Every staff member or volunteer will complete Equality Training Level 2 (online) provided by Positive Smiles each year. Additional training will be delivered in house, covering shared values and opportunities, protected characteristics, inclusion and the policy statements, including developing links with partner organisations. Our sessions

will embed equality. Data will be collected from when a participant first joins us and analysed regularly to ensure we meet our obligations.

Positive Smiles will comply with all current and relevant legislation which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to, the Equality Act 2010. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

As part of our monitoring, we will collect information on diversity, requests for adjustments and feedback from participants and other stakeholders, so that participation and outcomes can be reviewed in relation to this policy.

Any issues suggesting that our services may have unfairly affected participants will be reported to the Directors, who will lead on making changes to our services where necessary.

Signed by the Director



01/08/2026