

Afghan Connection

Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy statement

Our success as a charity depends on our ability to foster a work environment where people of all backgrounds and experiences can reach their full potential, regardless of such factors as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, or disability. As an organisation, we value a variety of different views, outlooks and approaches and what these bring to Afghan Connection.

To ensure that we embrace diversity fully at Afghan Connection, our policy is to:

- Treat all with whom we interact with respect and fairness;
- Encourage and allow talented individuals with different personalities, points of view, skills and approaches to the provision of required services to collaborate in an environment of mutual support;
- Promote equal opportunity in all areas of employment and prohibit discrimination against or harassment of members of the charity, job applicants and those with whom the charity engages;
- Understand better the needs of our diverse beneficiaries and the communities in which we work;
- Regularly monitor the effectiveness of our diversity policy and take proactive measures to advance it.

Aims of this Policy

Afghan Connection recognises and values people's differences and believes that it is important that they are supported to use their talents to reach their full potential.

The organisation will do all it can to ensure it recruits, trains and promotes people based on qualifications, experience and abilities for all roles within the organisation.

This policy is designed to ensure that Afghan Connection complies with its obligations under equality legislation and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.

Afghan Connection is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, responsibility for dependents, race, religion or belief, socio-economic background, political beliefs, sex and sexual orientation, or any other factor that can give rise to unfair treatment (defined as **protected characteristics**).

Using fair and objective employment practices, the organisation aims to ensure that:

- All employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.
- All employees and volunteers have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour. Such behaviour may come from other employees or by people (third parties) who are not employees of Afghan Connection such as customers or clients.
- All employees and volunteers have equal opportunities and the chance to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair discrimination.

- All employees and volunteers have the right to be free from discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic or because others perceive that they have a particular Protected Characteristic, even if they do not.

Definitions

Diversity means having a wide range of different people with different perspectives involved throughout our organisation. Achieving diversity depends on offering equality of opportunity.

Equal opportunities means making sure that one person is not treated less favourably than another person because of their:

- sex
- marriage or civil partnership
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity leave
- responsibility for dependents
- sexual orientation
- disability
- race
- religion or belief
- age
- socio-economic background
- political belief
- employment status

Unfair, unequal treatment of this kind is called discrimination. Discrimination can be either direct or indirect.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another on grounds relating to sex, race, marital status, disability, age, etc. (See above)

Indirect discrimination is where there is a working condition, practice or rule that disadvantages one group of people more than another. In other words it is more difficult for people from one group to comply with the requirement. Even if it is done accidentally indirect discrimination is unlawful. Indirect discrimination is only allowed if it is necessary for the way the business works, and there is no other way of achieving the required goal.

Responsibility

Employees and volunteers (including Trustees) of Afghan Connection have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed and to draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Responsibility for promoting awareness of this policy and monitoring that it is being followed rests with the Trustees.

Equality and diversity in practice

In carrying out the policy, the organisation will carry out the following actions:

- Use of selection criteria that does not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and promotion procedures
- Requiring entry to employment /volunteering or progression within AC to be based on merit

- Not discriminating in opportunities for recruitment, training, promotion or transfer of employees or volunteers
- Ensuring that every individual is assessed according to his or her personal capability to carry out a given job/role
- Ensure that all employees are given equal treatment with regard to terms and conditions of employment, provided they do the same or broadly similar work, or work of equal value
- Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the operation of grievance and disciplinary procedures

Implementation of the Policy

All staff, trustees and volunteers will be involved in creating an equality environment and one that values diversity.

Communications

All applicants, employees, Trustees and volunteers must read and sign a copy of this policy.

Working with Partners

- In selecting our partners we will expect of them a similar commitment to Equality and Diversity as per this policy.

Reporting discrimination / potential discrimination

Employees who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue by contacting their manager.

Volunteers who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue with their manager.

Employees and volunteers should also use this approach if they feel that they been the subject of harassment from someone who is not an employee. Afghan Connection will not tolerate any harassment from third parties towards its employees/volunteers/service users and will take appropriate action to prevent it happening again.

If an employee or volunteer witnesses behaviour that they find offensive in relation to age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, responsibility for dependents, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, socio-economic background, political beliefs, sex and sexual orientation, even if it is not directed at them, they should also use this procedure.

Review: This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure that it remains up to date and reflects the needs and practices of the organisation. The policy may also be reviewed if legislation changes or if monitoring information suggests that policy or practices should be altered.

Status of this policy

This policy and procedure is not a contractual term of employment. It is intended to act as a general framework only. It may be varied in any way and at any time where reasonably deemed necessary.

April 2018