Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

Hyde Park Source (HPS) is an organisation striving to:

- Provide an equality of opportunity, ensuring that those facing discrimination in our society feel welcome and safe within HPS and feel able to participate fully in it.
- Take account of the differences between individual people and groups of people, placing a positive value on those differences.
- Bring diverse groups of people together and foster communities of understanding, trust and appreciation.

2. Legislation

HPS and its employees have a number of obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of a "protected characteristic". There are 9 protected characteristics:

- age
- gender reassignment
- marriage and/or civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief, or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

3. Policy statement

HPS is committed to fostering a culture of **support, openness, learning, and belonging** while addressing discrimination with care and attention. Our approach is guided by our principles:

- **Connect - Support & Solidarity: "We've Got Your Back"** – We prioritise meaningful care for those who have experienced harm, ensuring they feel safe and supported.
- **Give - Person-Centred** – We communicate with humanity, avoiding complex language and acknowledging individuals' feelings and experiences.
- **Keep Learning** – We recognise our limitations and embrace a learning journey to address discrimination in a way that is "safe enough to try."
- **Be Active - Openness** – We address uncomfortable issues directly and handle cases of discrimination with transparency and accountability.
- **Take Notice - Belonging** – We strive to create spaces where everyone feels valued and included, recognising that fostering belonging takes active effort and care.

HPS is committed to actively ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive work environment for all employees, volunteers, and community members. We take proactive steps to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, by fostering a culture of respect, providing training, setting clear expectations of behaviour, and creating safe channels for raising concerns. We recognise that preventing harm requires active effort, not just reactive responses, and we are dedicated to continually improving our practices to protect the wellbeing of everyone in our workplace

4. Neurodiversity

HPS recognises and values neurodiversity as part of the natural spectrum of human difference. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where neurodivergent individuals feel safe, respected and supported to thrive.

We understand that neurodivergence - including conditions such as autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD affects individuals in different ways. Our approach is person-centred and based on open dialogue. We avoid assumptions or stereotypes and will work with individuals to identify meaningful adjustments that remove barriers and celebrate strengths.

Hyde Park Source will make reasonable workplace adjustments in consultation with the individual and offer flexible, creative solutions to ensure equity in experience and opportunity. Support may include adjustments to working patterns, environment, communication, or access to training and mentorship.

We also work to raise awareness and reduce stigma by offering learning opportunities to staff and creating spaces for open conversations and shared understanding. Our goal is to foster belonging through empathy, curiosity and ongoing reflection, staying true to our principles of support, care and openness.

HPS is committed to developing and promoting ways of working that ensure employees and volunteers are not subjected to any form of discrimination. Partners and stakeholders will be committed to the same aim.

HPS supports the principles of equal opportunities in employment and service delivery and opposes all forms of discrimination. This includes any behaviour, exhibited by an individual or group that, knowingly or unknowingly could have the potential effect of offending, humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group. If unacceptable behaviour is not challenged, it is likely to cause harm or distress to the recipient(s) and escalate into victimisation, bullying or harassment. We will not tolerate any behaviour that targets people for who they are or diminishes their dignity. We are committed to listening to and validating everyone’s experiences.

HPS is committed to equality of opportunity in its provision of services. To this end all who approach it for services will be treated with respect and dignity. We will ensure individuals feel respected, valued, included and are able to contribute fully to a positive environment free from bullying and harassment. Any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse will not be tolerated. Appropriate action will be taken, in line with HPS policies and legislation.

We believe that it is in the best interests of HPS, its employees and the people and communities it serves, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available throughout society are considered when employment opportunities arise. To this end, within the framework of law, we are committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the communities in which we operate.
We believe in creating a sense of belonging in all our groups. This means actively working to bring diverse people together, listening to each individual's needs, and addressing barriers to inclusion with care.

HPS undertakes to review at least annually the demographic composition of the workforce and volunteer base to ensure that we reflect on the individuals and communities we serve. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that people are treated respectfully, and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training and development, are based solely on objective and job-related criteria.

5. Action to Implement Policy

HPS staff, volunteers and Management Committee members are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that is not discriminatory or oppressive. HPS will take all possible steps to create an equal and diverse organisation:

We aim to: -

- Promote equality, diversity and the prevention of discrimination of all staff, volunteers, Management Committee members, partners and the wider community.
- We are committed to providing informed responses to incidents of discrimination. Individuals raising concerns or reporting harm will receive meaningful care throughout investigations and follow-up actions. We prioritise ensuring that those impacted feel heard, validated, and respected.
- Use fair and objective criteria in recruitment and employment decisions. Our selection procedures will be reviewed before each new recruitment to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination.
    - Job packs will include the equal opportunities statement.
    - All shortlisting will be carried out with personal details removed to bring a fair and objective approach.
    - Shortlisting and interview panels will, where possible include a member of the Management Committee and a beneficiary.
- We recognise that addressing discrimination is a journey, and mistakes may happen. We encourage open reflection, learning from challenges, and growth through training and feedback, ensuring our responses improve over time
- We are committed to addressing discrimination openly and constructively. This means holding honest conversations, sharing lessons learned with the team, and fostering a culture of trust and transparency.
- Collect accurate data on the protected characteristics, reviewing it annually and creating/updating a strategy to:
    - Reflect the diversity of people within the localities we work
    - Identify groups we do not represent and work to change this
    - Help us plan where future projects might take place
- Examine and review existing procedures for recruitment, selection, training and development as per the policy review timetable. Person and job specifications shall be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis.
- We will actively collaborate with community members to identify and remove barriers to participation in our groups, ensuring everyone can feel they belong and are valued.
- Ensuring staff are able to report any forms of discrimination experienced to the Management Committee, giving feedback on the usage of policies and procedures e.g. grievance, and via supervision and appraisals. Any discriminatory conduct shall be treated very seriously and is potentially a serious disciplinary matter.
- We will collaborate with community members to identify and remove barriers to participation in our groups, ensuring that everyone can feel they belong and are valued.
- Encouraging staff to take appropriate Diversity and Equal Opportunities training.
- Reviewing the policy, as per the policy review timetable.

- Where possible reviewing working patterns to enable us to offer flexible working to staff who require it. Where necessary, special provision will be made for staff returning to work following a break for domestic reasons.
- All staff and Volunteers having a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy.

6. Breaches of this Policy

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed you are encouraged to raise this matter:

If you are a Volunteer:

- With your Project Officer
- Or with the Volunteer Co-ordinator

If you are a member of Staff:

- With the Project Director
- Or a member of the Management Committee

Action will be taken in line with the relevant policy and associated procedures.

Our response to discrimination will prioritise support and solidarity. We aim to create a safe space where individuals feel heard, validated, and respected. Any individual raising concerns or reporting discrimination will receive meaningful care throughout the process.

Allegations regarding breaches of this policy will be treated with care and attention, prioritising support for the affected individuals and ensuring a fair and transparent process. Those who report harm will be supported through meaningful care and solidarity, aligned with our principle of "We've got your back." Investigations will be handled confidentially and with a commitment to learning from each case, improving our practices and fostering trust within our community.

Any member of staff who is found – following due process - to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

For individuals affected by external discrimination, we will provide care and assistance while taking appropriate action against those responsible.

We will balance accountability with opportunities for education and growth. Where appropriate, disciplinary actions will include a pathway for individuals to learn and commit to better practices in the future.

Allegations raised regarding external people will be taken seriously and investigated and appropriate action taken.

It is important that all employees are familiar with this policy as they could personally be liable under the Equality Act 2010.
We will review and report on cases of discrimination annually (anonymised) to identify patterns and areas for improvement, ensuring our processes evolve through reflection and feedback.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed and approved by the Management Committee	June 2025
Next review date	June 2026