



Values and behaviours

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Policy Summary

This policy sets out our approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion and what we will do to create a safe and inclusive organisation that learns and grows to proactively dismantle barriers, eliminate discrimination, and create equity for our people and those we serve.

Policy owner	Chief Operating Officer
Policy lead	Inclusion and Diversity Manager
Audience	All our people , international delegates, third-party UK providers and partners.
Legislation and regulation	The policy supports compliance with: Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Equality Act 2010 Human Rights Act 1998
Formally approved by	Board of Trustees
Approval date	June 2023
Next review	June 2026

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Red Cross is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment, where people can be their genuine selves in accordance with our values. We are dedicated to taking proactive steps to advance a culture of non-discrimination and equity.
- 1.2 This policy ensures we benefit from a variety of perspectives and better reflect the communities we serve, to make more informed decisions and better support people in crisis.
- 1.3 We believe that it is only through advancing **equity** and embracing **diversity** and **inclusion** that we can truly embody our Fundamental Principles, organisational values, and Code of Conduct.
- 1.4 This policy is supported by an **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** (EDI) procedure which sets out how the policy is applied operationally.

Definitions

- 1.5 Key words and terms can be found in **Appendix 3**.

2 Policy statement

Purpose and aims

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to **equity, diversity, and inclusion** and how we will create a safe and inclusive organisation that learns and grows to proactively dismantle barriers, eliminate **discrimination**, and create **equity** for our people and those we serve.

This policy aims to ensure we:

- 2.2 Treat everyone with dignity, fairness and respect and recognise individual uniqueness and identity regardless of any **protected characteristic**, combination of protected characteristics, or any other characteristic(s), socio-economic or demographic factors and/or cultural traits that may expose them to unfair disadvantage.
- 2.3 Challenge all forms of unequal, offensive and unlawful treatment.
- 2.4 Recognise that certain people are more disadvantaged and address their individual needs to overcome disadvantage and **discrimination** and ensure **equity**. This includes acknowledging the additional challenges that may be faced by our **people** around the world and in different cultures; working to support these individuals and acting equitably to protect their security and safety.
- 2.5 Have the leadership, effective management practices and resources in place so that everyone understands the barriers to **EDI** and the consequences of **discrimination**.
- 2.6 Develop a culture which attracts and retains **people** from the widest possible range of backgrounds and experiences into all levels of the organisation and create a positive experience for all.
- 2.7 Design and provide services that meet the needs of diverse communities, and which are accessible to all.
- 2.8 Amplify, value and act upon the voice of lived experience.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- > all elements and stages of our work and volunteering, and to all stages of the provision of our services and income generation. At each stage, the rights, expectations, and obligations set out in this policy apply equally.
- > anyone working for us. This includes all our staff, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns, and apprentices. The policy also relates to job applicants.
- > all our work in the UK and internationally, and our relationships with third-party providers, partners, donors, supporters, and stakeholders.

Standards

We will:

- 2.9 Promote **equity**, dignity, fairness, **inclusion** and respect for all those who work or volunteer for and have dealings with our organisation.
- 2.10 Create a culture that is free from **prejudice, bullying, harassment, victimisation, discrimination** and offensive behaviour. By educating our people on their responsibilities to champion EDI, promoting inclusive language, and respectful behaviour, and ensuring any breaches are appropriately dealt with.
- 2.11 Provide support and take complaints of **discrimination**, unequal, unlawful, or offensive treatment seriously. Including, ensuring those who witness, or experience it know how, and where, to make complaints and seek support.
- 2.12 Proactively uphold and advance the rights of individuals belonging to the legally recognised characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as those who may experience discrimination and marginalisation outside the Act's scope.
- 2.13 Consult and engage with our **people** to enhance our understanding of the needs of, and obstacles faced by, those from marginalised groups including through engagement surveys and diversity networks.
- 2.14 Ensure that our recruitment, selection, development, and progression processes are transparent, merit based, fair and accessible to all and remove barriers to progression and proactively widen diversity across senior leadership.
- 2.15 Make jobs at all levels accessible, available on a flexible basis, where possible, and proactively make **reasonable adjustments** to accommodate the needs of our **people**.
- 2.16 Commit to ensuring **transparency** in decisions, **equality** in pay, benefits, and job evaluations, and take steps to ensure any disparity in terms and conditions is eliminated.
- 2.17 Work to raise awareness of, and provide support for, health, safety, and wellbeing issues.
- 2.18 Ensure any new and reviewed policies, programmes, decisions that will affect our **people** will undergo an **Equality Impact Assessment** to ensure that any negative impact is mitigated wherever possible.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the policy and are responsible for championing **EDI**.
- 3.2 The Executive Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.
- 3.3 The Chief Operating Officer (policy owner) is responsible for ensuring that this policy allows achievement of external and internal standards.

- 3.4 The EDI Manager (policy lead), together with the policy owner, is responsible for the development, monitoring, and review of this policy.
- 3.5 The Executive Leadership Team / Head of Function/ Service are responsible for policy implementation supported by the accountability framework.
- 3.6 Our people are all responsible for adhering to this policy.

4 Laws and regulations

- 4.1 This policy supports our compliance with the requirements of relevant UK legislation including *the Equality Act 2010 and The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998*. Where legislation outside of the UK is contrary to the commitments of this policy, we aim to apply the highest standard will be applied.

5 Monitoring and compliance

- 5.1 We will collect and monitor diversity-related data to better understand the experiences of our people and identify and remove barriers, ensure our policy and strategies are working effectively and set EDI targets.
- 5.2 Any breach of this policy by our people will be promptly investigated through our Dignity at Work policy and procedure and the Volunteer Complaints Issues and Concerns procedure.

6 Training and support

- 6.1 To ensure compliance with the policy, our people will complete mandatory training.

7 Review and maintenance

- 7.1 The EDI policy was updated in June 2023. It is next due to be reviewed in June 2026.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: related documents
- 8.2 Appendix 2: document provenance
- 8.3 Appendix 3: definitions

Appendix 1: Related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Carers Policy	Sets out our commitment to supporting carers and the support that we offer to combine work with care
Complaints, Issues and Concerns procedure (for volunteers)	Ensures that volunteer complaints, issues, and concerns either by or about are dealt with in a consistent, fair and transparent way.
Complaints, concerns and feedback policy and procedure (for service users)	This policy explains the standards we have for managing complaints, concerns, and feedback we receive from outside of the British Red Cross
Dignity at Work policy and procedure	Ensures that our people and beneficiaries are always treated with dignity and respect and outlines options available for those who have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour.
Disciplinary policy and procedure	Ensures that we operate effectively, and to promote and support the value that we place upon expected behaviours and conduct at work.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion procedure	Provides further details on the commitments and operational steps for implementing the policy.
Ethical fundraising procedure	Details the step-by-step process for ethically screening fundraising partnerships and donations
Fundamental Principles	The fundamental principles mean that people we help can trust that we're neutral, independent, and impartial.
Flexible working policy and procedure	Outlines process for staff who want to work flexibly (e.g. part-time)
Grievance resolution policy and procedure	Provides a mechanism for staff to raise genuine concerns about work, our conduct, or any policy/practice.
Health and safety policy	Outline our written policy for health and safety in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
HR Policy Framework	Sets out the entitlements, rights, and responsibilities applicable to all staff

Modern Slavery corporate statement	Sets out the measures we have in place to mitigate against the exploitation and discrimination of workers within our supply chain.
Overarching ethical policy	Sets the framework of ethical standards through which we assess partnerships, investments, procurement, funding, or other significant activities, ensuring that we take a consistent ethical approach across all of our operations
Political and Other Affiliations policy	Provides direction on the implementation of the Fundamental Principles, in particular Neutrality, with respect to the holding of political or other public office.
Reasonable Adjustment protocol and guidance	Our agreed structure to manage requests for reasonable adjustments.
Recruitment and selection procedure	Includes our commitment to fair and merit-based recruitment and selection.
Safeguarding policy and procedure	The policy provides a clear framework for our approach to safeguarding.
Supporting Attendance Policy and Procedure	Sets out our commitment to promoting the health and wellbeing of our employees and ensuring that absence due to sickness is dealt with in a fair, consistent, and effective manner.

Appendix 2: Document provenance

Date endorsed	Category	Summarise changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
June 2011	Scheduled review	Change in legislation related to Equality Act 2010	Significant legislative change		
August 2013	Scheduled review	Updated to reflect organisation change	Scheduled review	Diversity Advisor	Board of Trustees
March 2014	Scheduled review	Review in line with legislative changes	Scheduled review	Diversity Advisor	ED People and Learning
March 2016	Interim update	Updated to reflect organisation change	interim update	Diversity Advisor	ED People and Learning

July 2016	Interim Update	Move definitions to appendix, updated related documents, reduce document length. Property access updated to reflect Disability policy commitment	Ensure the document is fit for purpose, including to meet requirements of updated policy template	Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Corporate Policy Officer (Governance)	ED People and Learning
March 2018	Scheduled review	Complete rewrite of the policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and strategically relevant	Rewrite policy in light of the Inclusion and Diversity strategy	All directorates	Board of Trustees
January 2021	Interim update	Changed the review date from April/21 to July/21; and minor updates	Review dates were changed in order to reflect the accountability model for inclusion and diversity which is due to finalize in Q2 2021	Diversity, Governance	Chief People Officer
June 2022	Interim update	Minor updates to reflect organisational changes; full review date changed from July/21 to September/22	A new inclusion and diversity strategy is being developed and will finalize in August 2022. This will incorporate the Accountability model that was delayed. This interim update is to ensure this policy remains fit for purpose until a full review takes place in September 22.	Head of People Experience (who assumed accountability for the Head of I&D role), Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Senior Director of People, Governance	Chief Operating Officer
June 2023	Scheduled review	Updated to ensure it is fit for purpose and strategically relevant	Integration of disability policy and alignment with EDI strategy Removal of any procedural information.	Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group, Diversity networks, Head of People Advisory, Standards Manager, Head of Compliance	Executive Leadership Team, Board of Trustees

Appendix 3: Definitions

Protected Characteristics

People are legally protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marital or civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race including racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)

Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion

Equality: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

Equity: refers to fairness and justice and recognising that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.

Diversity: the existence of variations of different characteristics in a group of people. These characteristics could be everything that makes us unique, such as our cognitive skills and personality traits, along with the things that shape our identity (e.g. race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, cultural background).

Inclusion - actively embracing people with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences.

Unlawful discrimination

When a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group of people would be treated based on their protected characteristic or religious or political opinion*. **Only in Northern Ireland*

Types of discrimination

- > **Direct discrimination** – treating someone unfairly because of their protected characteristic.
- > **Indirect discrimination** – A practice, policy or rule applied to everyone that may at first appear fair or neutral but puts people of a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- > **Discrimination by association** – a person is treated unfavourably because of another person's protected characteristic.
- > **Discrimination by perception** – when someone is treated unfairly because others believe they have a protected characteristic.
- > **Victimisation** – a person is treated less favourably because they have or is expected to complain about discrimination.
- > **Harassment** – unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

- > **Bullying** – as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence, and which may cause them to suffer stress.

Each of the above, are grounds covered by current anti-discrimination legislation in the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

Equality Impact Assessment

An evidence-based approach designed to help ensure that policies, practices, events, and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

People

Our people include employees (whether part time, full time, fixed term or permanent); casual workers, agency workers, contractors, international delegates, delegates on secondment, volunteers, interns, apprentices, job applicants, service users, donors, third-party providers, partners and supporters.

Prejudice

A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Reasonable Adjustments

Under anti-discrimination legislation (*Equality Act 2010*) employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. This means making changes to a disabled person's environment or the way their employment is structured to mitigate any disadvantages and allows them to work safely and productively. This may include, removing physical barriers, providing extra support, and providing flexibility.