



Values and behaviours

Disability Policy

The British Red Cross is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for volunteers, staff and service users ensuring that no one receives less favourable treatment due to their disability.

Policy owner	Executive Director of People and Learning
Policy lead	Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Audience	All staff and volunteers
Legislation and regulation	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1995, updated to Equality Act 2010</i>
Formally endorsed by	Board of Trustees
Endorsement date	July 2018
Next review	July 2021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Red Cross has made an open commitment to increase the percentage of disabled people providing its services, and increase accessibility to the services we provide, the programmes we deliver and in our retail shops. This reflects our steadfast commitment to our Fundamental Principles and reflects our core values that we should be inclusive in all we do.
- 1.2 We also re-iterate our commitment to the Council of delegates of The International Red Cross and Red Crescent's Movement's **resolution ratified in 2013 that called for the better inclusion of disabled people.**
- 1.3 To be able to deliver these ambitions and to demonstrate our compliance with anti-discrimination legislation, such as the *Equality Act 2010*, we need to recognise and empower everyone within our organisation. Our objective is to authentically deliver services that are available to everyone; that we live up to our Fundamental Principles, including impartiality and universality; and that we are inclusive and compassionate in all of the work that we do. This requires that we challenge ourselves to eliminate physical and attitudinal blockers that currently lead to discrimination.
- 1.4 By demonstrating our commitment to reflect the people we support, we will be better able to respond effectively and inspire credibility and confidence from those who turn to us for help.

- 1.5 We are committed to being an inclusive organisation to work and volunteer. Discrimination can have a profound and negative effect on our people's ability to contribute to their full potential and feel integral to the organisation. It can manifest itself in areas such as technology, recruitment, employment, volunteering, access to learning and development and physical access to the built environment.
- 1.6 Attitudinal barriers can also prevent disabled people from giving their best. It is vital, therefore, that there is a visible commitment to take steps to prevent discriminatory practices and raise the level of accessibility to a point where disadvantages are either removed altogether or minimised as much as reasonably possible.

Definitions

Substantial: The impairment is neither minor nor trivial.

Physical impairment: Can include long term conditions such as deafness, visual impairment, mobility impairments, heart conditions, diabetes, asthma, cancer or progressive conditions such as motor neurone disease.

Mental impairment: Can include mental health conditions such as depression, learning difficulties and learning disabilities

Fluctuating conditions: Conditions that change such as pain, MS, ME, Crohn's disease.

Long term: Means that the condition or impairment has lasted twelve months, is expected to last for at least twelve months, or is likely to last for the rest of someone's life.

Reasonable adjustment: 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.

2 Policy statement

Purpose and aims

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that we operate consistent with our Fundamental Principles and our 'inclusive' value, as well as to ensure that our practice is compliant with relevant legislation and regulation.

Standards

- 2.2 We will be assessing the equality impact of policies, projects and decisions, including around changes such as technology and building accessibility. Assessments identifying specific issues in relation to disabled people will be further assessed, and appropriate action taken in response as required.

- 2.3 We will ensure we consult with the internal and external stakeholders (e.g. Diversity Group, disability network, and disabled volunteers/staff/service users) on issues relevant to disability and accessibility.
- 2.4 We have included accessibility as a primary criterion within all projects such as technology services, buildings, learning and development, and employment practices.
- 2.5 No premises will be purchased or leased if they don't meet our accessibility standards or cannot be adapted to do so. Where our existing buildings do not meet these standards, we will have a clear exit plan so as to be able to replace these buildings with more accessible premises within a reasonable time-frame. Very limited exceptions should be assessed on a case by case basis; for example in an emergency situation when a building is required at short notice, or in some cases where commercial or business needs mean it would be unreasonable not to retain the current premises. In the limited instances where exceptions to this policy are being proposed, two relevant directors (the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director for the relevant service/activity) will provide a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer for decision. Please refer to the Decision Making Matrix for further information.
- 2.6 All reasonable adjustments will be provided both proactively and when requested. This may include making alterations to physical premises, the provision of specialist equipment or alterations in practical arrangements such as reduced working hours or a reassignment of some duties. It should be assumed that adjustments will be provided unless it can be proven that the request is unreasonable. When a reasonable adjustment request is made, the relevant manager will consult with the P&L advice and support (pandl_adviceandsupport@redcross.org.uk) who will offer support and advice using the [reasonable adjustment process](#).
- 2.7 During their employment or engagement, an employee or volunteer may become disabled as defined by the *Equality Act 2010*. In these circumstances, every effort will be made to assist in the individual through making appropriate adjustments. For further information, please see the [reasonable adjustment review procedure](#) and [making reasonable adjustments – guidance for line managers](#).
- 2.8 In appropriate circumstances, an individual should seek advice from relevant teams (including diversity, expert services and volunteering) as to how they can provide support. There may be instances where medical advice should be sought from an individual's doctor, the organisation's occupational health service, and from any relevant specialist organisations to ensure the most appropriate support can be provided.
- 2.9 The Government's "Access to Work" Scheme (available to residents in Great Britain only) provides an avenue for the organisation to seek support with specific accessibility funding. P&L advice and support

(pandl_adviceandsupport@redcross.org.uk) can provide additional information about this on request.

- 2.10 In order to ensure that disabled candidates and potential volunteers are not placed at a disadvantage, managers should:
- > Ensure that application packs are accessible, and available in different formats (e.g. large font size for visually impaired people) on request.
 - > Ask short-listed candidates and potential volunteers if they have any particular requirements when making the arrangements for the interview, and make appropriate adjustments. This may include for example ensuring the interview venue is accessible, or arranging for an induction loop or sign language interpreter for hearing impaired candidates.
 - > Provide special equipment, additional support or allow additional time to complete any selection tests.
 - > The individual responsible for health and safety at the site where the individual works or volunteers should be informed if a member of staff or volunteer has an impairment or condition so that appropriate provisions can be made for their health and safety (e.g. evacuation in the event of an emergency).
- 2.11 Relevant managers are responsible for ensuring that our services and retail shops are accessible, including to all of our people, our service users and customers. This will include establishing close links with service users and local disability groups to identify ways in which the needs of disabled service users can be met, and providing appropriate training and guidance to staff and volunteers.
- 2.12 We will meet the commitments to the Disability Confident Scheme and Disability Action Alliance's volunteer charter to demonstrate our commitment to recruiting disabled staff and volunteers.

3 **Responsibilities**

- 3.1 The Executive Director of People and Learning is the policy owner and is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- 3.2 The Diversity and Inclusion Manager is the policy lead and is responsible for ensuring the policy is regularly reviewed, updated and communicated.
- 3.3 All staff and volunteers are responsible as the policy applies to their specific roles. As set out in the British Red **Cross Code of Conduct**, we are committed to being an inclusive organisation and will not tolerate discrimination.

4 **Laws and regulations**

- 4.1 The British Red Cross uses the *Equality Act 2010* as its main anti-discrimination legal reference.

4.2 *The Equality Act 2010* defines disability as a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal daily activities.

4.3 The Act makes it unlawful to:

- > Discriminate directly against someone because of their condition or impairment. I.e. provide a service or employment on less favourable terms than those offered to non-disabled people
- > Discriminate against someone indirectly because of their condition or impairment. I.e. by failing to make reasonable adjustments to the environment, policies or practices that impact on disabled people specifically
- > Refuse to offer services or goods to someone because of their condition or impairment
- > Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or have supported a disabled person to make a complaint
- > Discriminate against a disabled person when renting, buying or needing to use property
- > Discriminate against a disabled person in education or training
- > Harass or discriminate against somebody for a condition or impairment they either do or do not personally have or due to being incorrectly perceived as disabled and
- > Treat someone less favourably because of their association with a disabled person

4.4 Any individual who currently has a condition or impairment, or has had a condition or impairment in the past, is automatically protected from discrimination under the Act. For example if a person previously had a mental health condition that met the legal definition of disability and is harassed because of this it would be considered unlawful.

5 **Monitoring and compliance**

5.1 We will achieve the objectives set out in this policy through:

- > Assessing the equality impact of all new all policies, projects and decisions around changes such as technology and buildings.
- > By having clear accessibility standards (e.g. **Digital Accessibility Guidelines**) in place and processes to support them.
- > By ensuring accessibility forms part of the recruitment and selection criteria and is clearly reflected in requirements for commissioned services or products.

- > By holding a risk register owned at leadership level to monitor issues and provide focus for areas requiring priority attention.
- > By undertaking regular surveys to collect the views of disabled people

6 Training and support

- 6.1 We provide a one hour on-line equality and diversity training and training relating to disability confidence has been included as part of the Foundation training course module, which is provided to all staff and volunteers.
- 6.2 In addition, disability confidence awareness training is offered across all levels of the organisation, including volunteer and staff management. Leadership training will also assist our people with understanding the standards we have set out in this policy, and our systems will support their compliance.

7 Review and maintenance

- 7.1 The policy was last updated in July 2018. It is next scheduled to be reviewed in July 2021.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: related documents
- 8.2 Appendix 2: document provenance
- 8.3 Appendix 3: impact assessment summaries

Appendix 1: related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Bullying and harassment procedure	Supports this policy in relation to bullying and harassment
Equality and diversity policy	This underpins the principles and commitments behind the policy
Decision Making Matrix	Sets out appropriate governance arrangements for the limited exceptions when exceptions to this policy are being recommended regarding property acquisitions.
Digital accessibility guidelines	Supports this policy in relation to accessible technology
Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement	This underpins the principles and commitments behind the policy
Making reasonable adjustments – guidance for line managers	Supports this policy in relation to managers making reasonable adjustments
Accessible Building Standards	Supports this policy in relation to building accessibility
Reasonable adjustment review procedure	Supports this policy in relation to ensuring adjustments are made where reasonable
Recruitment and selection procedure	Supports this policy in relation to recruitment and selection
Sickness absence procedure	Supports this policy in relation to managing absence

Appendix 2: document provenance

Date endorsed	Category	Summarise changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
July 2015	Endorsed by the Board	This policy replaces the previous Disability policy from 1999			Board
October	Interim update	Amendment to process for exceptional	To ensure the governance	Head of Property;	Executive

2016		approval of property acquisition not meeting accessible building standards; and updated to new policy template	arrangements we have put in place to ensure limited exceptions being recommended to the policy regarding property acquisitions have been reflected in the policy.	Executive Director of People, Learning; Corporate Policy Officer	Director, People and Learning
July 2018	Scheduled review	Review and update on policy to make sure it fit for purpose	Scheduled review	Diversity team, Governance	Executive Director, People and Learning

Appendix 3: impact assessment summaries

Privacy impact assessment summary:

Not required

Environmental impact assessment summary:

Not required

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

The EqIA has discovered no negative contentious issues within the policy. It however, it does highlight some positive impacts on protected characteristics (besides disability) such as age and sex, showing how characteristics can affect one another