

Equality and Diversity Policy



Values and behaviours

The British Red Cross is committed to encouraging diversity and equality of opportunity among its volunteers, staff and delegates to achieve their full potential in carrying out their activities in furtherance of the organisations mission and objectives.

We acknowledge and respect the cultural and religious diversity that exists within the UK, and will continue to work towards achieving a workforce that is representative of the societies served and where each member of our workforce feels respected and able to give their best.

Policy owner	Executive Director of People, Learning and Strategic Change
Policy lead	Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Audience	All staff and volunteers
Legislation and regulation	The policy supports compliance with: European Community Directives <i>Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</i> <i>Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998</i> <i>Equality Act 2010</i>
Formally endorsed by	Board of Trustees
Endorsement date	July 2016
Next review	December 2017

1. Policy statement

The British Red Cross helps millions of people in the UK and around the world to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and conflicts.

- 1.1 The British Red Cross believes that by drawing on and valuing diversity, the organisation will be enriched, and its ability to support people in crisis will be strengthened.
- 1.2 Definitions of relevant terms have been provided in appendix 2.

Purpose and aims

- 1.3 This policy details how the British Red Cross will treat all volunteers, employees, contractors and stakeholders with dignity and respect, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It will also set out how we will avoid the use of behaviour which could cause offence to those from protected groups.

- 1.4 This policy will ensure that equality and diversity principles are fully embedded within the organisation to strengthen the organisation's reputation as an employer and provider of volunteering opportunities and services and help build common purpose, common values and a shared identity.
- 1.5 It will help provide equality of access to British Red Cross services to all sections of the community, recognising that some individuals and groups may require specific measures to facilitate this.
- 1.6 It will ensure that the British Red Cross is genuinely open to individuals from all groups in the community, and to increase recruitment from currently under-represented groups. This will maximise the contribution of volunteers, staff and delegates.
- 1.7 The policy will enable the Red Cross to remove barriers which directly or indirectly restrict equality of opportunity and access to services, combat unfair/unlawful acts of discrimination throughout the organisation and ensure that our employment practices are compliant with legislation and regulations.
- 1.8 As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the British Red Cross is committed to, and bound by the Fundamental Principles and steered in its actions by its four values.
- 1.9 On the basis of these values and principles (in particular the principles of humanity, unity and impartiality) the organisation affirms that it will not tolerate on any grounds, including: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation:
 - > any unlawful acts of discrimination
 - > any form of harassment
 - > any unjustifiable acts of discrimination
- 1.10 Examples have been provided in Appendix 3.

2 Equal opportunities

- 2.1 Any breach of this policy (i.e. any unjustifiable behaviour or practice by British Red Cross personnel that results in less favourable treatment of any volunteer, member of staff, delegate, or service user) will be a matter for disciplinary action, as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy.
- 2.2 Every possible step will be taken to ensure that each individual is treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, promotion and career/personal development are based solely on job/task related objective criteria.
- 2.3 It is acknowledged that, given the many different contexts in which the Red Cross operates internationally, there will be occasions when the application of equal opportunities may be constrained in practice. Careful consideration will be given before any limiting conditions are applied and these must be clearly justifiable

and based solely on operational realities. Otherwise the principle of equality of opportunity will be respected and applied.

- 2.4 We recognise that promoting equal opportunities involves removing bias from existing policies, procedures and practices, recognising past imbalances, and taking steps to reduce the effects of previous discrimination in order to ensure equal access to employment, volunteering and services.
- 2.5 We are committed to developing a programme of action to promote diversity and equality, to monitoring and reviewing the organisations achievements in this area, and to sharing this information with volunteers, staff and delegates.
- 2.6 In order to seek improvements towards its desired aims, the British Red Cross will carry out audits of practice from time to time.

3 Action to implement the policy

- 3.1 In order to ensure that equal opportunities considerations underpin all of the British Red Cross activities - most obviously in the areas of recruitment and selection, pay and benefits, conditions of service, training and development, volunteering and all aspects of service development and provision – the British Red Cross will develop, implement and monitor a specific set of action plans.
- 3.2 The British Red Cross is committed to taking action as appropriate to ensure that:
 - 3.2.1 All applicants receive full and fair consideration in all employment decisions under the organisation's control.
 - 3.2.2 The recruitment, support and management of volunteers are conducted in accordance with the principles of this policy.
 - 3.2.3 Employment decisions are based solely on relevant and objective job-related criteria.
 - 3.2.4 Consideration is given to flexible working patterns such as job-share when filling vacancies, and agreeing wherever possible to requests to job-share in existing jobs.
 - 3.2.5 The organisation is committed to make use of positive action measures to redress the effects of existing inequalities.
 - 3.2.6 The workplace and design of jobs/tasks are regularly reviewed to identify possible barriers to employment, volunteering and service uptake, and action is taken as appropriate to remove any barriers to equality of opportunity.
 - 3.2.7 All volunteers, staff and delegates are aware that harassment in the workplace or in service delivery is not acceptable. All complaints will be investigated, with action taken as appropriate to prevent any form of harassment from continuing.
 - 3.2.8 All volunteers, staff and delegates are aware of the importance of using appropriate language and behaviour to ensure the dignity of all volunteers, staff, delegates and service users.
 - 3.2.9 All volunteers, staff and delegates will receive training to assist them to translate the requirements of this policy into practice.
 - 3.2.10 Existing policies, procedures, documentation and work practices are reviewed to ensure they each reflect the aims of this policy and that any equality targets which may be required are established to ensure equality of opportunity is reflected at all levels of the organisation and in all activities.

3.2.11 Whenever it is reasonable to do so, adjustments that may be required by a disabled person will be undertaken.

3.2.12 Volunteers, staff, delegates and service users are aware of their right to complain about discriminatory policies, procedures, practices, language or behaviour.

3.2.13 Procedures are available to ensure both informal and formal complaints are dealt with fairly, lawfully and sensitively.

3.2.14 The effects of this policy are monitored.

4 Complaints of discrimination or harassment

4.1 All complaints of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with in a sensitive and effective manner. Any complaint of discrimination or harassment - whether covered by existing legislation or not - will always be taken seriously and will be thoroughly and promptly investigated.

4.2 Appendix 1 lists all documents related to this policy, including the complaints, comments and concerns policies for staff, volunteers, and service users; and the disciplinary and grievance policies which outline how we will respond to any concerns raised about our people.

4.3 Delegates seconded to the Federation or the ICRC, when in the field, will be covered by the discipline or grievance procedures in place in those organisations.

5 The recruitment of staff and delegates

5.1 The British Red Cross recognises the importance of ensuring that the recruitment process is free from unfair or unlawful forms of discrimination. This approach is set out in the recruitment and selection policy.

5.2 All staff with recruitment responsibilities will undertake recruitment and selection training, including specific training on equal opportunity issues, to ensure that current best practice is observed and that recruitment is based solely on merit.

Management and support

5.3 Staff will have access to regular one-to-one supervision meetings and a more formal appraisal during the year, with their line managers in order to ensure that their work is monitored, that ongoing needs are identified, and that they receive appropriate development and support. Supervision discussions will provide opportunities for the manager to develop understanding of equality and diversity issues and ensure that relevant policies and procedures are being followed, whilst also allowing employees to raise concerns.

5.4 All decisions relating to the management, support and development of individuals will be objective, justifiable and fair.

5.5 Delegates who are seconded to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will be governed by the management and appraisal systems of those organisations. Delegates are offered the opportunity to discuss their development needs and raise any issues of concern during their debriefing in London. British Red Cross also seeks to support delegates during and between assignments through regular telephone and written communications, field visits and support initiatives and is committed to influencing the practices of the Federation and ICRC to ensure, so far as possible, that they follow best practice.

- 5.6 To achieve the highest quality of services possible and to maintain the quality of employment practices, the organisation will do all that it can to develop a committed and highly motivated workforce. The British Red Cross recognises the importance of maintaining fair opportunities for training and ongoing development for staff and delegates at all levels. The content and structure of training provision, as well as the way training is accessed, will be regularly reviewed to ensure that fairness.
- 5.7 Promotion will be based solely on objective criteria, which will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate.
- 5.8 All decisions related to redundancy and dismissal will be made only on the basis of objective criteria and reasonable belief, and will be reviewed regularly to ensure that no unjustifiable or unlawful decisions are made.

6 The recruitment of volunteers

- 6.1 All of our people involved with the recruitment of volunteers will undertake recruitment and selection training, including specific training on equal opportunities issues, to ensure that current best practice is observed and that recruitment is based solely on the individual's ability to perform the duties involved to the required standards.
- 6.2 We are committed to maintaining the highest possible standards of volunteering and as such recognise the importance of maintaining fair opportunities for training and ongoing development for its volunteers. The content and structure of the organisational training provision, as well as the way training is accessed, will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fair.
- 6.3 Volunteers will be offered regular opportunities to review their volunteering with the British Red Cross and to raise awareness of relevant issues. All decisions related to these matters will be considered in a consistent, justifiable and fair manner. All decisions related to Concerns, Issues and Complaints policy will be made on the basis of objective criteria in accordance with agreed policies.
- 6.4 The British Red Cross is committed to providing a mutually satisfying and rewarding relationship with the organisation to all volunteers. The British Red Cross is committed to ensuring that no unfair or unlawful discrimination occurs in the recruitment, training, support and management of its volunteers.

7 Services, Property and Procurement

- 7.1 All British Red Cross policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the requirements of this policy and will influence all aspects of service provision including quality of and access to services and premises.
- 7.2 We are committed to ensuring that all individuals and groups can use the services that are offered. The British Red Cross will keep under review the conditions under which service users' access services, including the means by which services are publicised, to ensure equality of opportunity. The need to translate information about services offered will always be considered when developing service related literature.
- 7.3 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.

- 7.4 The organisation is committed to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained in the provision of services. We will work to ensure that no person is treated less favourably when receiving services.
- 7.5 The organisation ensures that British Red Cross purchasers, contractors and providers are made aware of the organisation's fundamental principles, and our commitment to equality of opportunity and encouraging diversity. We expect them to ensure that their practices are consistent with our commitment.

8 Responsibilities

- 8.1 All of our people are expected to adhere to the requirements of this policy and the Fundamental Principles.
- 8.2 The **Board of Trustees** is responsible for promoting equal access and monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- 8.3 The **Executive Leadership Team** are responsible for championing this policy on behalf of the Board of Trustees, and lead their teams in a manner consistent with the policy. They will also work to ensure that all staff, delegates and volunteers who report to them are familiar and compliant with the requirements of this policy.
- 8.4 The **Diversity Team** is responsible for the development, updating, communication and implementation of this policy.
- 8.5 All **volunteers, staff and delegates** are expected to become familiar and comply with this policy and to ensure that their language, behaviour and practice are consistent with its requirements.

9 Legislation and regulations

- 9.1 The following pieces of legislation and codes of practice have informed this policy:

The Equality Act 2010

- 9.2 This legislation and introduces nine protected characteristics which are grounds upon which it is unlawful to discriminate. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

- 9.3 Prohibits employers from discriminating against applicants with spent convictions. Some employers are exempted and can take into account both spent and unspent convictions. For example, if the job involves working with vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, people with learning disabilities or people with mental health issues, or involves handling money or security work.

The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

- 9.4 Prohibits discrimination against anyone on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion, in employment, in the provision of goods, facilities and services and the sale or management of land or property and further and higher education. This also includes a persons supposed religious or political opinion and the absence of any, or any particular religious belief or political opinion.

European Community Directives

- 9.5 Establishes the need for Member States to ensure that men and women receive equal treatment as regards access to employment, including promotion, training, working conditions, pay, social security and dismissal.

10 Monitoring and compliance

- 10.1 The British Red Cross is committed to ensuring that the principle of equal opportunities for all is being achieved in practice. Monitoring is the only real way to ensure that the organisation's aims are being translated into practice, therefore all aspects of employment practice and service provision will be monitored on a regular basis using the nine protected characteristics.
- 10.2 The results of monitoring will be used to inform future policy and practice developments.

11 Training and support

- 11.1 Familiarisation with the policy is included as mandatory in all volunteer and staff role descriptions and inductions. Equality and Diversity modules are included in standard induction, volunteer line manager and recruitment and selection training and an on-line equality, diversity and inclusion module is available on the Red Cross e-learning platform.
- 11.2 Additional support and bespoke training is available from the Diversity team.

12 Review and maintenance

- 12.1 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years from endorsement.
- 12.2 The next scheduled review is due in December 2017.

13 Appendices

Appendix 1: related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement	
Disability Policy	
Recruitment and selection Policy & Procedures	
Bullying & Harassment policy	
Volunteering policy	
Disciplinary Policy & Procedures	
Grievance Policy & Procedures	
Complaints, Issues and Concerns procedure (for volunteers)	
Complaints procedures (for service users)	
Reasonable Adjustment procedure and guidance	
Political and other affiliations policy	
The characteristics of a well-functioning National Society	

Appendix 2: Definitions

Unfair discrimination

This occurs when a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group of people would be treated on grounds such as their sexual orientation.

Unlawful discrimination

This occurs 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*

Each of the above are grounds covered by current UK anti-discrimination legislation.

Discrimination can arise in the following ways:

- > directly
- > Indirectly
- > discrimination by association
- > victimisation
- > harassment
- > third party harassment

Direct discrimination

This form of discrimination occurs when a person who is entitled to be treated equally, is directly adversely affected by a decision that results in that person being treated less favourably. Most often, though not exclusively, this will be as a result of a decision to directly discriminate against a person based on prejudice or stereotyping.

Example: A male haulier, who believes that driving a truck is not a suitable job for a woman, refuses a suitably qualified female driver employment based on his stereotypical opinion about which jobs women are best suited for. The haulier may state this as the reason or, as is more common, will suggest the female did not get the job based on another criterion.

If the female applicant could prove that the decision not to employ her was based on her sex, this would amount to unlawful direct sex discrimination.

Example: An Asian job applicant who meets the shortlist criteria is rejected based on his ethnic origin.

This would constitute an act of direct discrimination on the grounds of race and would be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010

Example: A suitably qualified male employee is refused promotion based on his sex. This would constitute an act of direct discrimination on the grounds of gender and would be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Example: An advert contains references to the sex of the person required when a person of either sex could do the job. This could constitute direct discrimination on the grounds of gender and would be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Example: A manager has chosen a male volunteer to take part in a major training programme on the basis that his “face fits” overlooking the needs of the British Red Cross and the level of experience or expertise of other volunteers who could have undertaken

this training programme. This could constitute direct discrimination on the grounds of gender and would be unlawful under the Equality Act.

Indirect discrimination

This is created by the application of unjustifiable rules or conditions that may at first appear fair and neutral, but once they are put into practice, a smaller proportion of one group than another group can comply with them. As such, they place those groups, which cannot comply at a distinct disadvantage, and so may indirectly discriminate against them.

Example: A firm decided that only administrators with ten years' continuous service could apply for promotion. The need to amass ten years' continuous service restricted the number of women who could comply with this requirement, as many women had taken time off to have children.

This requirement therefore placed women at a particular disadvantage. Indirectly, the requirement to have ten years' continuous service therefore indirectly discriminated against women and was unlawful under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Example: A health authority decided to engage in a breast screening campaign in an area with large numbers of ethnic minorities many of who did not read English as a primary language.

The authority published the information about the campaign only in English, restricting therefore the numbers of ethnic minorities who might take up the service being offered.

The requirement to be able to read English placed some racial groups at a disadvantage and so indirectly discriminated against them and was unlawful under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Example: A manager wishes to recruit a Mobility Aid volunteer and would ideally like to recruit a man to this role because of the need to lift heavy equipment. (S)he tries to get around this by asking that volunteers applying for this work should have previous experience of heavy lifting perhaps gained working in the construction industry.

This would constitute indirect discrimination against women as the request that the experience may have been gained in the construction Industry, a sector of the employment market which traditionally has employed 90 per cent males and only ten per cent females - of which the majority are in administrative positions - would discriminate against more women than men (it is not asking for heavy lifting experience which constitutes the indirect discrimination). This would be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation

This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another person would be treated because he/she has complained about discrimination, or it is suspected they are going to complain, and the person is then made to suffer a detriment.

Example: Having made a complaint about discrimination, a person is denied a promotion they would otherwise have received. Other examples would include being threatened with the sack, having their workload increased or being subject to any other form of detriment.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

An example might include inappropriate language or behaviour which focuses attention on a person's religion or belief. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except pregnancy and maternity and marriage or civil partnership. Employees are also protected from harassment based on the perception of having a particular protected characteristic or by association with a person with a particular protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of people at work or whilst volunteering.
Racial harassment	Unwanted conduct of a racial nature or other conduct based on racial grounds, affecting the dignity of people at work or whilst volunteering.
Disability harassment	Offensive or intimidating behaviour relating to a person's disability. It can include unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct relating to the person's disability, which causes that person offence or distress.
Sectarian harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sectarian nature, or other conduct based on religious belief or political opinion affecting the rights of people at work or whilst volunteering. Sectarian harassment may amount to an unlawful act under the terms of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order.
Bullying	The British Red Cross considers that bullying constitutes a form of harassment. As such, any form of bullying for whatever reason is unacceptable to the British Red Cross. A volunteer, member of staff or delegate who engages in bullying will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Forms of harassment may include

- > Unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching to serious physical assault
- > Verbal or written harassment in the form of jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, sectarian songs, letters
- > The visual display of posters, graffiti, flags
- > Isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities
- > Coercion, ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- > Intrusion by pestering or stalking
- > Bullying, physical, verbal or emotional or a combination of these carried out by an individual or a group of people. Examples of types of bullying:
 - Physical: taking belongings, hitting, pushing and other forms of violence
 - Verbal bullying: name calling, teasing and other hurtful or insulting remarks
- > Emotional bullying: spreading stories and rumours, exclusion from social groups, ridicule and humiliation.

The bullying and harassment policy contains further guidance and establishes in detail the procedures for making and managing complaints related to harassment.

Positive action

Whilst it is lawful for an employer to encourage groups that are currently under-represented in the organisation to apply for employment positions, selection must always be based on merit. It is also lawful to target training at groups who are under-represented in certain positions within the organisation, to enable them to compete on an equal basis.

Selecting a person based on their gender or ethnic background is known as “positive discrimination” and is unlawful.

Occupational Requirement

There are times when it is fair and lawful to state a preference for a person of a particular sex or a particular ethnic origin. This is when you can prove that it is essential for the purposes of the job to be of a particular sex or to come from a particular ethnic background. This is referred to as an occupational requirement.

Example: Advertising for a female counsellor to work in a female rape crisis centre.

Equality targets

These are targets, which an organisation has decided to establish to ensure equality of opportunity.

Example: If British Red Cross monitoring of the workforce revealed that a particular group was under-represented, it could set a date by which it would like to see that group more fully represented. It would then undertake a review of its policies, procedures and practices to establish if any of these were limiting or restricting the progress of that particular group, and then develop a strategy for removing them. This may include using positive action measures.

Equality targets are not the same as setting or establishing **quotas**. Quotas involve setting aside a number of jobs only to be filled by a particular group. This restricts the opportunity for other people to fill these positions and would therefore result in unfair or unlawful discrimination.

Appendix 4: document provenance

Document Revision Record

Date endorsed	Category	Summarise changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
June 2011	Unknown	Change in legislation related to Equality Act 2010		Diversity Advisor	Board of Trustees
August 2013	Unknown	Updated to reflect internal organisation change		Diversity Advisor	
March 2014	Review	Review in line with legislative changes.		Diversity Advisor	
March 2016	Review	Updated to reflect internal organisation change		Diversity and Inclusion Manager	
July 2016	Interim Update	Move of definitions to an appendix, update of related documents, minor changes to text to reduce document length. Property access commitment updated to reflect July 2015 Disability Policy commitment	Reformatting into new policy template	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	