



Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

Autism Support Allerdale & Copeland (ASAAC) recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. This policy seeks to value and harness these differences and to make our services relevant and approachable for everyone. We aim to draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences in order to meet the changing needs of our members, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters.

(ASAAC) believes in equality of opportunity and values all individuals regardless of any collective identity. However, we recognise that individual and institutional discriminatory practice has meant that some groups have not had equal access to services and fair employment practices, nor to opportunities in participating and volunteering. Equality diversity and inclusion statement (ASAAC) has adopted equality, diversity and inclusion as core values and places all its policy development in the context of the objectives of:

Ensuring that all individuals who come into contact with (ASAAC), whether as a parent carer representative, employee, colleagues or in other capacities, are treated with dignity and respect

Ensuring that the opportunities (ASAAC) provides for learning, personal development and employment are made available on a non-discriminatory basis

Providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all who are involved with (ASAAC)

(ASAAC) seeks through all its policies and actions to be a genuinely inclusive organisation. The objective is to integrate the principles of equal treatment and promotion of diversity into all aspects of the organisations activity.

Legal framework

(ASAAC) endorses wholeheartedly the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to the positive promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion amongst all members of (ASAAC). To achieve this (ASAAC) will:

Strive to ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the conduct of (ASAAC) work

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share the 'protected characteristics' that are listed below, and all other members of (ASAAC)

Foster positive relations between people who share the 'protected characteristics' and those who do not (ASAAC) recognises that individuals often face discrimination due to:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity (including race, colour, caste and nationality)
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership

Pregnancy or maternity
Religion, belief
Sexual orientation.
Political affiliation
Social class
Employment or financial status
Non - relevant criminal conviction.
Caring responsibilities

(ASAAC) is committed to providing an environment free of stereotyped and oppressive beliefs, attitudes and practices. We seek to promote diversity and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner. We work to reduce unfair discrimination in society and seek to eliminate any such practices within the organisation.

Defining equality, diversity and inclusion

Equal treatment involves much more than simply treating everyone alike; it requires a recognition that some groups and individuals have particular and specific needs that need to be met if they are to enjoy equal access to participation opportunities and experience gained by being part of, or working with (ASAAC) . We recognise that the (ASAAC) Group may need to work in a range of different or more flexible ways, in order to ensure genuine equality of access or opportunity for groups and individuals who come from a position of persistent and longstanding disadvantage. Valuing diversity involves an acknowledgement of the benefits and intrinsic worth derived from the range of difference within our community, and fostering it as a strength. We aim to celebrate and to value the differences between individuals' cultural, social and intellectual contribution to the (ASAAC) and will seek to promote greater mutual understanding between groups and individuals who reflect these differences, and will seek to utilise the talents and experiences that each and every individual can bring to the organisation.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the (ASAAC) Group will:

Ensure understanding of this policy and seek guidance if there are any questions promote equality, diversity and inclusion for others and strive to create a safe supportive and welcoming working environment

Ensure their own behaviour and language does not discriminate or oppress

Ensure diversity and equal opportunities will be considered in all aspects of the work of (ASAAC)

Challenge inappropriate behaviour or discrimination

Report unacceptable behaviour in accordance with (ASAAC) policies and procedures

Expectations of (ASAAC) representatives:

Language or behaviour from people participating in (ASAAC) which is offensive to any of the groups outlined in our statement will be challenged and addressed, to enable them to explore their attitudes and value base. Any necessary support, training or skills will be offered to assist in addressing this with those involved in proportion to the contact and involvement had with those individuals. Support will also be offered to any individual who has been exposed to such offensive behaviour or language, language or behaviour from (ASAAC) representatives, and volunteers which is offensive to any of the groups outlined in our statement is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any aspect of our work. Work practices which are discriminatory will be challenged and changed. Where contracts, job descriptions or codes of conduct are published these should explicitly state that any individual working with, or on behalf of (ASAAC) must comply with this Equality and Diversity Policy.

Agreed -by ASAAC Trustees – 7th June 2018

Registered Charity Number – 1180100

To be reviewed in June 2020, by ASAAC Trustees – Reviewed – June 2020 – to be reviewed – June 2022 – reviewed
June 2022 – to be reviewed June 2023 – reviewed June 2023 – to be reviewed June 2024 – reviewed June 2024 – to
be reviewed June 2025 – reviewed June 2025 – to be reviewed June 2026