

Braintree Youth Project Charity

Equality and Diversity Policy

Aims

The Braintree Youth Project Charity (BYPC) is committed to promoting and achieving equality of opportunity for all members including children & young people, staff, volunteers, and other persons that come into contact with BYPC. We believe that all people are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity irrespective of ability, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, age, social class, appearance or sexual orientation (hereinafter referred to as 'Protected Characteristics').

Values, principles and standards

Equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice with children and young people, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is therefore underpinned by the following values, principles and standards:

- equality and social justice
- acknowledging and valuing diversity
- respect for others
- compliance with equal opportunities legislation
- elimination of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination
- active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behaviour
- commitment to inclusive education which enables and supports all members of our community to develop their full potential
- commitment to the positive development of all staff, volunteers and Board members
- accountability for compliance with this policy by all our members and others engaged in the business or activities of the BYPC

Objectives

The objectives of this Equality and Diversity Policy are to:

- develop an ethos which respects and values all people
- actively promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations amongst people within our community and the wider communities within which we work
- eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour

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- deliver equality and diversity through our policies, procedures and practice
- do our utmost, with the available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to our services and activities
- take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by stereotyping and cultural expectations

Responsibilities and accountabilities

The Chair is responsible for:

- giving a consistent lead on equality and diversity
- promoting equality and diversity inside and outside the organisation

Board members are responsible for:

- making sure BYPC follows all of its equality and diversity policies and codes, and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality
- putting the equality and diversity policies and codes into practice
- making sure that all staff and volunteers know their responsibilities and receive any support and training necessary to carry them out
- following this policy and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- challenging any incidences of unfair discrimination, or racial, sexual or other stereotyping, perpetrated by members or other staff
- keeping up-to-date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training

Monitoring and review

The Policy has been approved and adopted by the Board of Directors of the BYPC. The Board will review the policy every three years, or as required to ensure it remains compliant with Equality and Diversity legislation

1. Our obligations under our Constitution and the Law

1.1 The constitution of the charity lays down that the object of the charity is:

“To advance in life and help Young People through:

(a) The provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life;

(b) Providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.”

1.2 An awareness of equal opportunity is part of moral and spiritual development, and equal opportunity is an essential ingredient in improving the conditions of life. Moreover, we consider that equal opportunity is an important element of the Christian ethos, as it is for many other faith groups.

1.3 In striving for equal opportunities we recognise that we need to apply a clear set of policies and practices of our own and for ourselves. At the same time, we will abide by any provisions of statute, which bear upon equality of opportunity and non-discrimination, whether in the sphere of services to the young, or in dealings with adults on a wide range of matters.

2. The persons affected

2.1 With regard to children and young people, we believe that:

In exercising these powers for providing facilities, or assisting in providing facilities, we must ensure that no restriction shall be applied to any child or young person residing in the area who wishes to use the Charity’s facilities, which unreasonably and unfairly restricts or denies access to such use, whether it be on grounds of religious affiliation or background, race, gender, income or other such considerations.

2.2 With regard to adults the same rule applies and in addition we accept as a matter of policy that the Charity should strive for equality of opportunity in all its dealings with adults. These relate, notably, to matters of employment, but there is also the need to consider, amongst other things, equal opportunities in other matters, e.g. in dealings with parents, organisations, and local communities.

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2.3 Notwithstanding 3.2 above, as a charity formed by (though now independent of) the churches of Braintree, due weight will be given to the need to retain the Christian ethos of the charity in its employment and other policies.

3. The Braintree Youth Project Charity's policies on children and young people

3.1 It is the policy of the Charity to make it clear in its original agreements with the organisations and individuals concerned, and in any update of those agreements, that any prima facie breach of the equal opportunity clause above will incur risk of withdrawal of support.

3.2 The Charity has a direct responsibility to ensure that the terms of this policy on equal opportunities are met in full. This would, for example apply to any aspect of the Braintree Youth Project Charity we might directly run. It would also apply to any associated events such as adventure weekends, concerts, or fun-days.

3.3 In all such cases we, the Board of Directors, and our employees and volunteers who are directly involved, are bound to observe the equal opportunities requirement in full. Any breach by a Board member will be a breach of trust; and an apparent breach by employees, which did not at the time have the clear support of the line manager, will be regarded as a breach of discipline. It is the policy of the Directors to make this clear to all employees and volunteers.

4. The implications of equal opportunity for young people and children

4.1 There are some circumstances where access is reasonably withheld, or where conditions necessary for certain young people to attend cannot be provided reasonably or at all. For example, persons organising a group have a duty of care to particular young people to protect their safety. If a young person is so unruly or aggressive that it endangers others the young person can and must be excluded, temporarily or permanently. Equal opportunity does not override the duty of care. Or if, for example, the physical conditions of a meeting hall are not appropriate for a young person with a disability, then again access can reasonably be withheld.

4.2 We believe that the Charity, and its staff, should challenge all cases where access is being withheld, and satisfy itself that any restriction is reasonable and necessary in the circumstances. Where it is possible to overcome the difficulty in the longer term, for Braintree Youth Project charity

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example, by investment or training, the Charity is keen to promote consideration of the necessary changes, and will, in appropriate circumstances seek to assist with resources, where they are obtainable. We also believe that wherever possible exclusions should be temporary, and be reconsidered regularly.

4.3 We recognise that inside a young person's club there is, typically, a menu of things to do, from which young people may choose. It is not always practicable or even desirable to ensure that only opportunities which suit every young person are provided, or to ensure that every young person 'gets a go' on every occasion. Inevitably there are some worthwhile activities which are not suitable for some children, because they require physical capability which cannot be matched, or have some feature which could give rise to indirect discrimination, or are essentially restricted in numbers who can participate, etc.

4.4 The Charity believes that there are many occasions where the value of diversity can and should be celebrated, and where young people need to learn to celebrate it without giving rise to feelings of unfairness and exclusion. So the Charity and its employees and volunteers will question any bland uniformity in provision, and will seek to make people aware of the need to appreciate and recognise diversity.

4.5 Nevertheless, any imparity in provision can conceivably give rise to direct and indirect discrimination in a number of dimensions, and vigilance is needed to identify and challenge all such cases.

4.6 The Project's policy is, therefore, to insist on three principles:

- Where a proposed activity can be widely accessible without major loss of benefit to individuals and groups, the presumption should be in its favour.
- Where some children and young people are reasonably not able to enjoy an opportunity, a broadly equivalent opportunity should be offered or promised at the time, and offered then or subsequently, (but not too much later).
- Notwithstanding these two points, over a longer period of time, e.g. a school holidays, every effort should be made to provide a range of opportunities which, although on occasion providing different and selective opportunities for individuals, is, nevertheless, acknowledged by all involved to be broadly equivalent in value for all the children and young people concerned. In assessing

this equivalence, due regard must be paid to any implications or characteristics of activities which could reasonably give rise to feelings of indirect discrimination.

4.7 It is the Charity's policy to monitor application of these three principles in all its activities involving children.

5. The Implications of equality of opportunity for adults and others

5.1 The Charity recognises the need for equal opportunity in its dealings with adults. The main areas where policy is needed relate to employment, volunteers, and the treatment of parents.

5.2 The Charity's policy is to be an equal opportunities employer. It will offer all posts in its employ by open advertisement, and will emphasise its standing as an equal opportunities employer in those advertisements. In defining its criteria for qualifications and skills required, it will only adopt and declare criteria which are legal, and strictly necessary for effective working, and it will have no covert or undeclared criteria. In considering applicants, it will have no favoured internal candidates, and it will always take up references. In sifting candidates for interview it will only use its declared criteria, and will discount information which is irrelevant. At interview it will ensure that all candidates have the same degree of opportunity to show how they match the criteria, and, in doing so, will make proper provision for disadvantages and disabilities that candidates may present. Those interviewing will ensure that variation in the rigour and coverage of the questioning does not occur, so as to give an unfair opportunity to particular candidates.

5.3 (a) As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. These posts are specified in the Memorandum of Association Article 7. Members and kept under regular review. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupation requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented in accordance with Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.

5.3 (b) As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the charity undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to

discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

5.3 (c) Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent separately and in confidence to the Lead Recruiter at Braintree Youth Project Charity and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to, as part of the recruitment process. Unless the nature of the position allows questioning about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

5.3 (e) We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g., the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

5.3 (f) At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.

5.3 (g) Every person undergoing a DBS check will be made aware of the DBS Code of Practice and a copy will be available on request.

5.3 (h) We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

5.3 (i) Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from working with the Braintree Youth Project Charity. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the individual's offences.

5.3 (j) The Charity mostly has dealings with volunteers, both on its own activities and events, and in independently managed clubs and activities which it supports. It is the policy of the Project to apply or support the principle that volunteers should be chosen or adopted in ways which ensure that only openly declared relevant and reasonable criteria are applied, and that there is no direct or indirect discrimination in the process of inviting, vetting, accepting and supporting volunteers.

5.4 In its dealings with parents or guardians, the Charity's policy is to ensure that parents all have access to the same information, responsibilities, rights and privileges, and that none are offered unequal or unfair treatment for reasons which are unfair and discriminatory.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is the policy of the Charity to monitor equal opportunities in all aspects of its work, and to appraise the scope and effectiveness of its equal opportunities systems and achievements on a regular basis, making adjustments and learning from experience as necessary.

Children and Young People

Admission to any aspect of the Braintree Youth Project Charity service is open to any and every child or young person of the relevant age group; and within the numerical size constraints of the building. The Youth Project includes 'drop in' sessions and more targeted activities.

Adults

We value diversity among staff and volunteer helpers.

In all staff appointments we will follow procedures designed to ensure equality of opportunity. Adults should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes

Programme

No programme can fit everyone's abilities totally all the time so care must be taken that over a period of time a variety of abilities and interests is catered for. There must also be an element of positive teaching about appreciating the value of difference between people in our world.

Staff and volunteers will facilitate children and young people's engagement with the programme. They will encourage children to respect and value each other's particular uniqueness and gifts.

From time to time there will be 'extra' items e.g. a fun day, a holiday club, a weekend away, a day trip. The particular emphasis of one of these may not appeal to all our children and young people. This is acceptable provided that over a period of time, a variety of interests is catered for.

Monitoring

At all times staff and volunteers will monitor behaviour to make sure that no unfair discrimination takes place. Any child who is persistently criticising or abusing another should Braintree Youth Project charity

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be spoken to by leaders; if the problem persists then parents should be involved and as a last resort the child or young person may be excluded from the club.
Staff and volunteers who show unfair and unjustifiable discrimination should be taken to task by a member of the Board and, as a last resort, if the problem continues and appears insoluble, be removed from post.
Staff and volunteer appointment systems are monitored by the BYPC Board and the day to day activity of staff monitored by the line manager.

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