EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Morecambe Bay Partnership is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to a policy of treating all its workers and job applicants equally and inclusively, aligned with the expectations within the Equality Act 2010. Workers means volunteers, contractors, Trustees, partner organisations, beneficiaries and paid workers. The Charity will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal, and including our approach to volunteering. We will continue to create an inclusive working environment, listening to and encouraging diverse perspectives in all aspects of our work including decision making.

It is the policy of the Charity to take all reasonable steps to employ and promote on the basis of their abilities and qualifications without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. In this policy, these are known as the protected characteristics. The Charity will appoint, train, develop and promote based on merit and ability alone.

Workers have a duty to co-operate with the Charity to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination. Action under the Charity's disciplinary procedure will be taken against any worker who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the worker liable to summary dismissal. Workers should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.

The **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023** introduces a **proactive legal duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment**. The organisation will take **proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment**, from within the workplace and from third parties including members of the public, partner organisations & contractors/freelancers. Prevention activities include risk assessment, training, and clear reporting routes.

Workers must not harass, bully or intimidate other workers for reasons related to one or more of the protected characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the Charity's disciplinary procedure. Workers who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Workers should draw the attention of their line manager, CEO or a trustee, to suspected discriminatory acts or practices. Workers must not victimise or retaliate

against a worker who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who has provided information about such discrimination. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the Charity's disciplinary procedure. Workers should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

The charity recognises that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination simultaneously.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics, a job applicant or a worker is treated less favourably than other job applicants or workers are treated or would be treated.

The treatment will still amount to direct discrimination even if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the job applicant or worker is associated and not on the job applicant's or worker's own protected characteristic. In addition, it can include cases where it is perceived that a job applicant or a worker has a particular protected characteristic when in fact they do not.

Discrimination after employment is also unlawful if it arises out of and is closely connected to the employment relationship, for example refusing to give a reference or providing an unfavourable reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of the charity's activities.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all job applicants or workers, but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial group.

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is applied to the job applicant or worker a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) which is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicant's or workers. A PCP is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicant's or worker's if:

- It is applied, or would be applied, to persons with whom the job applicant or worker does not share the protected characteristic,
- The PCP puts, or would put, persons with whom the job applicant or worker shares the protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom the job applicant or worker does not share it,

- It puts, or would put, the job applicant or worker at that disadvantage, and
- It cannot be shown by the Charity to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an worker is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because they have raised or supported a grievance or complaint of unlawful discrimination, or because they have issued employment tribunal proceedings for unlawful discrimination, or they have given evidence in connection with unlawful discrimination proceedings brought by another worker. However, a worker is not protected if they give false evidence or information, or make a false allegation, and they do so in bad faith. Post-employment victimisation is also unlawful, for example refusing to give a reference or providing an unfavourable reference because the former worker has done one of the protected acts set out above.

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to eliminate victimisation in all aspects of employment.

Equal pay and equality of terms

The Charity is committed to equal pay and equality of terms in employment. It believes its male and female workers should receive equal pay where they are carrying out like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. To achieve this, the Charity will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

Grievances and complaints

All allegations of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. The Charity will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints about unlawful discrimination from workers. Such complaints should be raised promptly under the terms of the Charity's grievance procedure.

If the complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

Workers will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint was both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring equal opportunity

The Charity will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel practices and procedures to assess whether equal opportunity is being achieved. This

will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its standard working practices. If changes are required, the Charity will implement them. The Charity will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome substantial disadvantages caused by disability.

Next review date	New name & version number
October 2025	EDI Policy reviewed Oct 2025
September 2026	EDI Policy updated Sept 2026
September 2027	