



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### Our Organisation

**The United Kingdom is at the forefront of change in supporting children, young people and adults with undiagnosed & diagnosed Fetal Alcohol Spectrum, we strive alongside our FASD Alliance to work across England and Wales to challenge attitudes, improve services and provide information and advice.**

***Equality, Diversity and Inclusion underpins FASD Friends values in everything we do.***

Through our services we support people to be empowered and be heard. Equality, diversity and inclusion is about driving societal change for all people including our members, staff, volunteers, committee members, beneficiaries, partners and our wider society.

***FASD Friends have carefully considered our members best interest, we have co-productively produced this policy which represents their voice.***

Our aims are to achieve inclusivity through reflective and active engagement and authentic actions and commitments. This document provides the guiding principles of what EDI means to us, our organisational aspirations and intentions for the foreseeable future.

### What does Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) mean to us?

These terms can mean many different things to everybody, we respect everyone's view. Our priority is ensuring that everyone has a solid understanding of what EDI means to us collectively at FASD Friends and how we intend to translate our commitments into action over the next 3 years. This begins with defining what

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equality, diversity and inclusion will look like for our FASD Friends Community Interest Company values.



As a Community Interest Company, we focus on our members and that's what drives us to make a difference for upholding their Equality and Diversity and what it really means to be 'Inclusive'.

**Published by NICE quality standards in 2022 the 'Disabled children and young people up to 25 with severe complex needs: integrated service delivery and organisation across health, social care and education'**

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"When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service".

"Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it."

We hope that we can champion the values within this document to support families with children, young people & adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, to celebrate why our differences and support their challenges.

NICE guideline Published: 9 March 2022:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng213/resources/disabled-children-and-young-people-up-to-25-with-severe-complex-needs-integrated-service-delivery-and-organisation-across-health-social-care-and-education-pdf-66143773521349>

## **What we mean by Inclusion**

FASD Friends ensure that practices and policies provide equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other under-represented groups, will always be in place.

We believe in an inclusive society, the definition of who needs support and people who are marginalised or minoritised often goes beyond the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Many marginalising factors cannot be observed easily such as neglect, poverty, invisible disability, domestic and child to parent violence or homelessness. Therefore our application of inclusion must be for everyone who comes into contact with our CIC. These values drive us.

FASD Friends believe our language and behaviour directly impacts on how people perceive their environment. Setting standards and policies outlining expectations and addressing EDI failures transparently is imperative for safeguarding our team and our beneficiaries.

Our policies exist to transparently outline what is expected from our FASD Friends team.

All members and our team, no matter what their lived experience, should feel able to bring their whole selves without judgement, stigma or unfair retribution. We will continue to be transparent about our expectations of respectful behaviours to one another and reflect this in our practice towards everyone who comes into contact with FASD Friends. Our standards rely on mutual respect and we will not tolerate abuse.

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It is important to us that we strive towards creating and maintaining inclusive physical and virtual spaces where members can courageously ask for what they need, such as reasonable adjustments through our team, in order to be at their best.

***We believe in equality of opportunity for all, in challenging inequality and discrimination particularly in relation to minority and socially excluded groups.***

We are committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and stigma.

FASD Friends works to support & improve the lives of LGBT+ children and young people. All LGBT+ children and young people deserve to feel safe and thrive.

Within these parameters, no service user, employee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment because of their gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or any other criteria.

We recognise that many people in society can experience discrimination.

Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through for example exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect (where there is a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone but has an effect which particularly disadvantages a particular group and cannot be justified).

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Staff, volunteers and service users have a responsibility to abide by this policy to ensure in equal opportunities and prevent discrimination. Staff, volunteers and service users should draw the attention of the relevant line manager to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

We recognise that some service users may, due to past or present trauma or distress, say or do things not otherwise compatible with the Equality and Diversity Policy. We will do all we can to support understanding or challenge such behaviour and wherever possible we will aim to support people to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that discrimination will never take place at FASD Friends on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, religion, belief, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status.

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We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to the organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.

FASD Friends will challenge discrimination in its own policies and ensure that all policies comply with equalities legislation.

This policy covers all employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, researchers, casual workers and agency workers.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it without notice at any time.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Directors of FASD Friends.

Should any substantive changes be necessary, the CEO & Directors will refer the revised policy to the committee for its approval.

Protected Characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity.

**Direct Discrimination** is when you treat someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic, whether or not the person possesses that protected characteristic. For example, not employing someone because they are a woman, or they are a particular race.

**Indirect Discrimination** is when a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone has an effect which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

**Detriment arising from disability** is when an employer treats an employee unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of the employee's disability, and it cannot be justified in relation to the job. For example, dismissing someone because of their poor attendance record when their absence was as a consequence of a disability, and without the employer being able to show that the dismissal was a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Duty to make reasonable adjustments** is where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to others who are not disabled, the employer/service provider has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage, including changes to physical features, providing auxiliary aids and providing information.

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability)

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that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

**Victimisation** the act of singling someone out for cruel or unjust treatment "we ALL should be able to speak up without victimisation".

**Positive discrimination** is where you make a decision in someone's favour because of their particular characteristic, e.g. race, gender or disability. Positive discrimination is usually unlawful, unless it falls within one of the very limited exceptions contained in the anti-discrimination legislation in relation to disability or as a genuine occupational requirement.

**Positive action** is proportionate steps taken to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise a disadvantage, to meet their needs or to participate, when the organisation reasonably thinks that people who share the protected characteristic suffer the disadvantage, or have needs that are different, or a disproportionately low number of such people participate in an activity. Examples would include setting equality targets (but not quotas which are unlawful); encouraging people from particular groups to apply where they are under-represented; training for promotion or skill training for employees from under-represented groups who show potential.

All information about FASD Friends services, all promotional materials and publicity will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

FASD Friends will audit its services in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and wherever possible make reasonable adjustments.

FASD Friends will maintain up to date information on access to services which offer support to minority communities. Information and promotional materials will be made available where possible in translation and in formats such as large print, Braille and on tape on reasonable request.

FASD Friends will seek to use reasonable adjustments to provide access to services which could include sign language interpreters and language interpreters on request, ensuring that they are available for all who need to access.

On sufficient notice, FASD South West will take responsibility for arranging interpreters and informing service users of arrangements made unless a service user would like to organise this themselves.

At times, a service user may ask for a specific team member to support them. If this is felt appropriate to the service user's needs, then FASD Friends will seek to use reasonable adjustments depending on the resources available.

FASD Friends will strive to maintain a diverse staff and volunteer group which reflects the needs of the communities which we serve.

FASD Friends as an employer, will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This applies equally to voluntary positions and anyone undertaking work experience with us. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, selection for redundancies, work allocation and any other employment related activities.

FASD Friends recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- We endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates;
- Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit;
- Where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are underrepresented in the workforce;
- Selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of sex (including marital status, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity and paternity), sexual orientation (including civil partnership status), religion or belief, age or disability; other than in those instances where Allsorts is exercising permitted positive action or a permitted exemption; and
- Wherever appropriate and necessary, lawful exemptions (genuine occupational requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups. All staff, volunteers and service users will be made aware of their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Discriminatory behaviour, discriminatory practice, discriminatory policies and discriminatory language will be challenged, both within FASD Friends services and when working in partnership.

Staff and volunteer training programmes will include training on working with minority communities. Staff and volunteers will be offered the opportunity to receive training on the use of equalities monitoring processes.

FASD Friends will take appropriate action in relation to identified discrimination. The person/people concerned will be required to cease, if the discrimination persists then action will be taken, e.g. through use of the Disciplinary Policy, Complaints Policy, Grievance Policy, Harassment and Bullying Policy. Where discriminatory practice has been identified and the person/people concerned have been requested to cease, action will be taken if it persists. All staff and volunteers will be expected to take part in diversity training to include anti-discriminatory practice and cultural competence.

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