

Involve Kent

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Date First Approved:	25 th September 2023
Last Review Date:	20 th May 2019
Next Review Date:	September 2026
Approved By:	Board of Trustees
Policy Review Interval:	3 years

1. Policy Statement

Involve Kent is committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity, treatment, access and freedom from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. This Policy aims to support the removal of unfair and discriminatory practices within Involve Kent and ensure that involve is an inclusive organisation. Involve Kent is committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination.

Involve Kent also aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its clients and customers by offering a choice of access which will ensure that the services provided by Involve Kent are accessible and inclusive.

Involve Kent believes that all employees, volunteers and clients are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

2. Objectives of this Policy

2.1 To prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 To ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and dismissals are determined based on capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.

3. Designated Officer

Name: Gary Wells

Position: Deputy CEO

Telephone Number 03000 810005

4. Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and includes discrimination by perception and association.

5. Types of Discrimination

5.1 Direct Discrimination

This occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

5.2 Indirect Discrimination

This is the application of a practice, policy or rule which the employer applies to all employees, but which is such that:

- It is detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person the employer is applying it to represents;
- The employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on a neutral basis; and
- The person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.

5.3 Harassment

This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

5.4 Victimisation

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have brought or intend to bring proceedings, or they have given or intend to give evidence.

6. Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination

6.1 Sex

It is not permissible to treat a person more or less favourably on the grounds of sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to men, women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender

reassignment. Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination.

6.2 Age

It is not permissible to treat a person more or less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.

6.3 Disability

Definition - If you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities (Equality act 2010) It is not permissible to treat a disabled person more or less favourably than a non-disabled person. Involve Kent is committed to the social model of understanding disability. Involve Kent will make Reasonable adjustments to give a disabled person as much access to any services and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.

6.4 Race

It is not permissible to treat a person more or less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.

6.5 Sexual Orientation

It is not permissible to treat a person more or less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because s/he is homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

6.6 Religion or Belief

It is not permissible to treat a person more or less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.

7. Positive Action in Recruitment

Under the Equality Act 2010, positive action in recruitment and promotion applies as of 6 April 2011. 'Positive action' means the steps that Involve Kent can take to encourage people from groups with different needs or with a past record of disadvantage or low participation, to apply for positions within the Organisation.

If the Company chooses to utilise positive action in recruitment/promotion, this will not be used to treat people with a protected characteristic more favourably, it will be used only in tie-break situations, when there are two candidates of equal merit applying for the same position.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

Involve Kent has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include (but is not limited to):

- 8.1 Making adjustments to premises;
- 8.2 Re-allocating some or all of a disabled employee's duties;
- 8.3 Transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability;
- 8.4 Relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office;
- 8.5 Giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation;
- 8.6 Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee;
- 8.7 Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees; or
- 8.8 Any other adjustments that the Company considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the Company.

If an employee has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by Involve Kent, they should contact the Designated Officer above.

9. Responsibility for the Implementation of this Policy

All employees, volunteers, subcontractors and agents of Involve Kent are required to act in a way that does not subject any other employees or clients to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their race, sex, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

The co-operation of all employees and volunteers is essential for the success of this Policy. Senior employees are expected to follow this Policy and to try to ensure that all employees, volunteers, subcontractors and agents do the same.

Employees may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by Involve Kent and in some circumstances an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.

Involve Kent takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

10. Lawful reasons for discrimination

Under certain circumstances Involve Kent may have lawful reasons for discrimination. Lawful discrimination can only be used to fulfil a legitimate aim and the aim must not be discriminatory in itself but must be a genuine or real reason. E.g. The aim could be to

protect the dignity of somebody requiring personal care and Involve Kent could then justify arranging a male / female carer.

Any case for lawful discrimination will be presented to the CEO who will be responsible for its sign off.

11. Acting on Discriminatory Behaviour

If you consider you are a victim of unfair discrimination or harassment or you believe you are witnessing such behaviour, you may raise the issue to Human Resources, through the grievance procedure, by discussing the matter with your line manager and or contacting the EDI group representatives. or by first discussing the matter with your line manager.

12. Advice and Support on Discrimination

Employees may contact their employee or trade union representative if access to such an individual is possible.

Other contacts include:

Equality Advisory & Support Service

Address: Freepost EASS Helpline FPN6521

Telephone: 0808 8000082

Textphone: 0808 8000084

Website: <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

Citizens Advice Bureau

2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road

Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RY

Telephone: 01622 767661

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

13. The Extent of the Policy

13.1 Involve Kent seeks to apply this Policy in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of all employees. Involve Kent offers goods and services in a fashion that complies with the spirit of this Policy.



13.2 This Policy does not form a part of any employment contract with any employee and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied, collateral or express terms to any contract made with Involve Kent.

13.3 Involve Kent reserves the right to amend and update this policy at any time.