

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy v.4

1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

DAS is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in regard to employment and access to the services it provides.

The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy. Equality means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to benefit from DAS services and for employees and volunteers to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. Inclusion means ensuring everyone who approaches DAS feels comfortable to be themselves and at work employees and volunteers feel the worth of their contribution. Diversity means the celebration of individual differences. We will actively support diversity and inclusion and ensure that everyone we come into contact with is valued and treated with dignity and respect.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All job applicants, employees, service users, volunteers, trustees and workers, including agency workers, are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of our work including recruitment, selection, service delivery, training, career development and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in DAS as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with Trustees, individuals at all levels in DAS have a responsibility to treat anyone they come into contact with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of everyone in DAS to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout DAS.

DAS will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no job applicant, employee, volunteer or worker receiving less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010: race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin and caste; religion or belief; disability; sex; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; and age. In accordance with our overarching equal treatment ethos, we will also ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on account of their trade union membership or non-membership, or on the basis of being a part-time worker or fixed-term employee.

Our objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and volunteers, and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant documented Codes of Practice and procedures.

Trustees have the primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:

- not discriminating in the course of engagement against employees, workers or job applicants;
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination;
- bringing to the attention of our workforce that they may be subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, or other appropriate action, for unlawful discrimination of any kind; and
- seeking feedback from staff, volunteers and service users about the accessibility of our services and how they can be improved.

We make clear in our training and other communications to our people that they can contribute by:

- not discriminating against fellow employees, volunteers, workers, clients, suppliers or members of the public with whom you come into contact during the course of your duties;
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination;
- reporting any discriminatory action to the Manager (or the chair of the Management Committee if the report is about the Manager); and
- identifying opportunities to ensure our services are accessible to all of our potential beneficiaries.

The successful achievement of these objectives necessitates a contribution from everyone and everyone has an obligation to report any act of discrimination they come across.

Internally, anyone who considers that they are a victim of unlawful discrimination may raise the issue through the Grievance Procedure.

2. BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

DAS is committed to creating a harmonious and safe working environment which is free from harassment and bullying and in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity. DAS strives to ensure that the different experiences, abilities and skills of each individual are valued by others. Inappropriate behaviour should be challenged. It is the intention of DAS to encourage everyone to behave in a proper manner at all times.

Harassment or bullying causes stress, anxiety and unhappiness to individuals, creates an unpleasant environment in which to work and a violation of employment and discrimination laws. This can reduce efficiency and may ultimately have an impact on the way in which services are delivered to our clients. For these reasons, it is important that DAS as an employer and its people strive to achieve a working environment which is free from this type of behaviour.

The harassment, bullying or victimisation may be a one-off incident or it may be a series of incidents. Dignity at work can be affected by inappropriate behaviour which causes offence, whether it is intentional or not.

DAS is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their race; religion or belief; disability; sex; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership and age or as a result of being subjected to any inappropriate behaviour.

Everyone should expect to:

- be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- be able to work, or access our services, free from unfair treatment, bullying, harassment or victimisation; and
- be valued for their skills, abilities and experiences.

All employees are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with the content of this policy;
- treat all with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- contribute towards a positive working culture;
- challenge or report unacceptable behaviour;
- be mindful of others when expressing views; and
- cooperate with investigations into harassment and bullying.

Breaches of this policy will be considered unacceptable behaviour and will be treated as misconduct which may include gross misconduct warranting dismissal. Everyone must comply with this policy.

DAS is committed to dealing with any issues quickly, positively and confidentially when and if they occur.

Our people are warned that while they may make comments outside of work, for example on social media, DAS may use such evidence in investigations on bullying and harassment matters.

3. DEFINITIONS

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant characteristic set out in the Equality Act 2010 that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. The protected characteristics are race; religion or belief; disability; sex; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership and age.

Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault;
- verbal and written harassment, including via email or letters, through jokes, teasing, banter, offensive language, gossip or slander;
- sharing inappropriate images or videos;
- using racist slang, phrases or nicknames;
- isolation, non-cooperation or exclusion from social activities;
- intrusion by pestering, spying or following.

Employees may also be subject to harassment from third parties such as clients, suppliers or the general public where interaction with those third parties is a part of their role.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour which is often but not always, an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. The following examples may constitute bullying:

- threats, abuse, teasing, gossip or practical jokes;
- humiliation and ridicule either in private, at meetings or in front of clients;
- name calling, banter, insults or devaluing with reference to age or physical appearance;
- setting impossible deadlines or imposing excessive workloads;
- making unjustified criticisms;
- excessive monitoring;
- removing responsibilities;
- allocating menial or pointless tasks;
- withholding information;
- refusing requests for leave, holiday or training unreasonably.

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees

All employees have a responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment that respects the dignity of employees. You should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which harassment and bullying can cause, and ensure that your behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be harassment or bullying. No one should practice or encourage such behaviour and should make it clear to all concerned that you find it unacceptable. You should also support colleagues if they are experiencing harassment or bullying and are considering making a complaint. You should alert the Manager to any incidents to enable DAS to deal with the matter.

Managerial

The Manager & Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that harassment or bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. They are committed to the elimination of bullying

and harassment and must be vigilant in preventing acts wherever possible. Trustees also have a particular duty to set a proper example by treating everyone with dignity and respect and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question. Trustees also have a responsibility to explain this policy to their staff and take steps to promote it positively. They will be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes a complaint, provide full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and ensure that there are no further problems or any victimisation after a complaint has been raised or resolved. DAS will provide training to ensure that all staff are fully aware of this policy and the procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying.

5. PROCEDURES

Dealing With Alleged Harassment Or Bullying

Complaints can be made both formally and informally. Whichever route is chosen the individual will be offered guidance and assistance at every stage to help them resolve the problem as soon as possible and to stop the harassment. Speaking directly to the person causing the problem at an early stage is often sufficient to stop the behaviour.

If the informal approach is not effective then a formal complaint may be made through the Grievance Procedure, preferably as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. Individuals will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter will be investigated thoroughly. If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and action will be taken, to stop the behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence. Individuals will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against anyone for complaining about harassment or bullying is a disciplinary offence.

Dealing With Alleged Harassment Or Bullying From A Third Party

Any form of harassment from third parties during our dealings with them will not be tolerated by DAS. We appreciate that a decision to report harassment from a third party may be difficult, particularly if the third party has a long-standing working relationship with DAS. However, we encourage our people to report any instance of harassment from a third party so that management can take appropriate action. Individuals affected should follow the procedure set out above if they experience harassment from a third party, after which a meeting will be arranged, and an investigation undertaken.

Our action, where a complaint is substantiated, will depend on the circumstances of the case and may include:

- speaking with the alleged harasser and warning them that any future occurrence of harassment will result in DAS withdrawing provision of its services to the harasser;
- where appropriate, contacting the harasser's employer and making a complaint against them – we will explicitly ask for this conduct to stop and we may require that the harasser is removed from our account;
- refusing to continue to provide our services to the harasser;
- reassigning the provision of the third party's services to another team member.

Version Control Table			
Version	Date	Author	Reason for change
1	July 2020	Jo Bowen, Manager	New
2	July 2021	Nick Bennett, Chair	Update
3	August 2022	Rod Gibson, Secretary	Review
4	August 2023	Rod Gibson, Secretary	Review