



Break Tha Cycle Equal Opportunities Policy

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Applies to	Trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors, applicants, partners, visitors, beneficiaries and anyone taking part in charity activities.
Covers	Equal access, fair treatment, reasonable adjustments, inclusive recruitment, inclusive services, reporting concerns, monitoring and learning.

This policy should be read alongside Break Tha Cycle's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Harassment Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Complaints Policy, Volunteer Management Policy and any employment or recruitment procedures. It is intended as a practical adoption draft and should be tailored to the charity's services, premises, funder requirements and staffing model.

1. Purpose

Break Tha Cycle is committed to providing fair and equal opportunities for all people who work with, volunteer for, govern, support or use the charity. This policy explains how the charity will prevent unlawful discrimination, remove barriers to participation, make reasonable adjustments, promote dignity and make decisions based on clear and relevant criteria.

The aim is not only to avoid discrimination, but to build a culture where people are welcomed, listened to, supported and able to take part safely and meaningfully.

2. Scope

- This policy applies to all charity activities, including governance, recruitment, employment, volunteering, programmes, events, mentoring, community activities, fundraising, communications, partnership working and online activity.
- It applies to decisions made before, during and after a person becomes involved with the charity, including application, induction, access to services, supervision, concerns, complaints and ending involvement.
- Where an activity is delivered with a school, funder, local authority, venue or partner, this policy should be applied alongside the relevant partner agreement and safeguarding arrangements.

3. Policy statement

- Break Tha Cycle will treat people fairly and with dignity, respect and kindness.
- The charity will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, hate incidents, abuse of power or retaliation against anyone who raises a concern.
- The charity will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and will consider individual needs linked to communication, access, health, neurodivergence, caring responsibilities, religious observance, pregnancy, trauma, language, age and other relevant circumstances.
- Decisions will be made on the basis of transparent, relevant and proportionate criteria, not stereotypes or personal preferences.
- Equality and inclusion risks will be considered when planning activities, services, events, recruitment, communications and partnerships.
- Trustees and senior leaders will monitor serious or repeated equality issues and ensure learning is acted on.

4. Key definitions

Term	Meaning for this policy
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Equal opportunities	Ensuring people have fair access to involvement, support, roles, services and decisions, with barriers identified and addressed wherever reasonably possible.
Protected characteristics	The characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
Direct discrimination	Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	Applying a rule or practice that appears neutral but disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and cannot be justified as proportionate.
Discrimination arising from disability	Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability, unless it can be objectively justified.
Reasonable adjustment	A change to remove or reduce a disadvantage experienced by a disabled person. This may involve changing a process, providing support, adapting communication, changing timing or making practical access changes.
Harassment	Unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic, or sexual harassment, that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Victimisation	Treating a person badly because they have raised, supported or are believed to have raised an equality concern.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	Approve this policy, set the culture, ensure legal and regulatory duties are considered, receive serious or repeated equality reports, and make sure resources are available for implementation.
Chair / Chief Executive or senior lead	Ensure the policy is implemented, allocate named responsibilities, act on concerns, consider equality implications in decisions and escalate serious issues to trustees.
EDI Lead	Support inclusive practice, advise on reasonable adjustments, maintain monitoring arrangements where proportionate, review equality-related concerns and coordinate learning.
Safeguarding Lead	Assess equality concerns that also involve harm, abuse, exploitation, bullying, neglect, discriminatory abuse or risk to children or adults at risk.
Managers / programme leads	Plan accessible activities, brief staff and volunteers, make day-to-day adjustments, record decisions and act promptly on concerns.
All trustees, staff and volunteers	Follow this policy, challenge unacceptable behaviour safely, respect confidentiality, complete required training and report concerns.
Partners and contractors	Meet the charity's equality standards when acting for or with the charity and cooperate with any review, complaint or safeguarding process.

6. Equal opportunities standards

Inclusive access to services and activities

- Activities should be planned so that venue, timing, cost, transport, communication, sensory environment, food, digital access and safety arrangements are considered in advance.
- Public information should explain how people can request support, raise concerns or ask for adjustments.
- Eligibility criteria must be connected to charitable purposes, safeguarding, funding rules or practical capacity, and must not unfairly exclude people.
- Where demand exceeds capacity, selection or waiting list criteria should be fair, documented and capable of explanation.
- Activities involving children or adults at risk must consider safeguarding, consent, parental/carer involvement and risk assessment alongside equal opportunities.

Recruitment, volunteering and trustee appointment

- Role descriptions should be clear about essential requirements and should not include unnecessary criteria that exclude people unfairly.
- Recruitment and selection decisions should be based on skills, experience, suitability, safer recruitment requirements and the needs of the role.
- Applicants should be told how to request reasonable adjustments for application, interview, induction, training or role performance.
- Interview questions should be relevant to the role and used consistently, with scoring or decision notes kept where proportionate.

- Safer recruitment, DBS and suitability checks must be applied fairly, consistently and only where appropriate to the role.

Reasonable adjustments

- Requests for adjustments should be welcomed and considered promptly, respectfully and individually.
- A person does not need to use the words “reasonable adjustment” for the charity to consider support needs.
- Possible adjustments include accessible formats, extra time, rest breaks, quiet spaces, interpreters, communication aids, flexible attendance, different meeting formats, support persons, adapted duties, sensory adjustments, travel support, online options or changed processes.
- Where an adjustment cannot be made, the reason must be explained and alternatives considered.
- Information about disability, health, neurodivergence or support needs must be handled confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis with consent where appropriate.

Decision-making and positive action

- The charity may take lawful, proportionate steps to reduce disadvantage or encourage participation by under-represented groups where this supports charitable purposes.
- Equality considerations should be recorded for significant new services, events, partnerships, premises changes, communications campaigns and recruitment processes.
- Decisions that may adversely affect a person, such as refusing access, ending a placement or excluding someone from an activity, must be based on evidence, risk, fair process and consideration of reasonable adjustments.

Bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviour

- Unacceptable behaviour includes discriminatory jokes, slurs, stereotyping, offensive images, hostile online posts, intrusive questions, exclusion, bullying, sexual harassment, intimidation, misuse of power, outing someone’s identity, retaliation and repeated microaggressions.
- Managers and activity leads must act when they witness or are told about unacceptable behaviour, even if no formal complaint has been made.
- Concerns involving children, adults at risk, abuse, exploitation, hate crime, sexual misconduct, violence or coercive control must be considered under safeguarding procedures as well as this policy.

7. Procedure for making and recording reasonable adjustments

1. Listen to the person and ask what support would help. Avoid intrusive requests for medical information unless genuinely necessary and proportionate.
2. Consider the barrier: communication, physical access, sensory environment, timing, rules, expectations, social interaction, digital access, cost, transport, health or safety.
3. Identify possible adjustments with the person, parent/carer or advocate where appropriate.
4. Assess whether the adjustment is reasonable in the context of the activity, safety, resources, safeguarding and the charity’s capacity.
5. Agree the adjustment, who will put it in place, how it will be communicated and when it will be reviewed.
6. Record the decision in the adjustment record or support plan. If refusing or changing a requested adjustment, record the reasons and any alternatives offered.
7. Review adjustments after incidents, feedback, changes in activity or changes in the person’s needs.

8. Procedure for reporting equality concerns

8. Concerns can be raised with a manager, programme lead, volunteer lead, EDI Lead, Safeguarding Lead, Chair of Trustees or through the Complaints or Whistleblowing Policy.
9. The person receiving the concern must check immediate safety, listen without judgment, record key facts and explain next steps.
10. The concern must be triaged to identify whether it is an equality matter, safeguarding matter, disciplinary matter, volunteer conduct matter, complaint, grievance, criminal matter or a combination.
11. The charity will make reasonable adjustments to reporting and investigation processes, including support for communication, advocacy, meetings and written responses.
12. People raising concerns must be protected from retaliation. Victimisation may result in disciplinary, volunteer conduct or contract action.
13. Outcomes may include apology, changed arrangements, training, supervision, mediation where appropriate, conduct action, partner action, referral to external agencies, policy changes or trustee review.

9. Monitoring and learning

- The charity will monitor equality-related concerns, complaints, reasonable adjustment requests, recruitment patterns, volunteering access, service take-up and feedback where proportionate and lawful.
- Monitoring data should be collected voluntarily where possible, anonymised or minimised where appropriate and handled under data protection rules.
- The Board should receive periodic assurance reports on serious or recurring equality issues, trends, actions and learning.

- Learning may lead to changes in training, risk assessments, accessible information, venue choices, supervision, role descriptions, partnership arrangements or service design.

10. Breach of policy

Breaches may result in management action, volunteer review, disciplinary action, suspension from activity, termination of appointment or contract, referral to safeguarding agencies, police contact, Charity Commission reporting where appropriate, or changes to partner arrangements. The response will be fair, proportionate, evidence-based and focused on safety and learning.

11. Related policies and documents

- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Safer Recruitment, DBS and Suitability Checks Policy
- Volunteer Management Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Whistleblowing Speak Up Policy
- Data Protection, Privacy and Records Management Policy
- Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy
- SEN/SEND Behaviour Support Policy

12. Implementation checklist

Check	Record / action
Named equality/EDI lead confirmed and contact details circulated.	
Reasonable adjustment request process added to participant, volunteer and recruitment information.	
Accessible formats and communication support arrangements identified.	
Recruitment templates reviewed for unnecessary criteria or exclusionary wording.	
Venue and activity accessibility checks added to event planning.	
Staff and volunteer briefing completed on equal opportunities, reporting and reasonable adjustments.	
Equality concerns log and adjustment record created.	
Trustee reporting route agreed for serious or repeated equality concerns.	

13. Working templates and records

Equality impact quick check

Field	Entry / notes
Activity / decision / change being considered	
Who may benefit?	
Who may be disadvantaged or excluded?	
Protected characteristics or other barriers considered	
Evidence used, including feedback or lived experience	
Reasonable adjustments or changes agreed	
Safeguarding or health and safety implications	
Decision and rationale	
Person responsible	
Review date	

Reasonable adjustment record

Field	Entry / notes
Name / reference	
Date request identified	

Nature of barrier or support need	
Adjustment requested or proposed	
Decision made	
Reason if not agreed in full	
Alternative offered	
Who needs to know	
Consent / confidentiality notes	
Review date	

Review and version history

Version	Date	Changes made	Approved by
1.0	25/06/2026	Approved for use	Board of Trustees

Official guidance and source material

This policy was drafted with reference to the following official guidance. The policy owner should check the latest versions before each review or after any significant incident.

- GOV.UK: Equality Act 2010 guidance.
- GOV.UK: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 statutory guidance.
- GOV.UK: SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Acas: equality and discrimination at work guidance, where the charity has employees or workers.