



Equality and Diversity Policy

Footsteps wish to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities. This applies to job applicants, employees, students, and users of Footsteps' services. Footsteps recognizes and incorporates the Equality Act 2010 in every aspect of its operation. The Footsteps equality policy will be implemented within the framework of this legislation.

Footsteps recognize that in our society, groups and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against. Footsteps also recognize that young people are often subject to discrimination specifically on grounds of their age. Footsteps is committed to achieving Equal Opportunities in all aspects of its work.

COMPLIANCE

Footsteps Trust complies with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty as this relates to schools and details of the objectives that have been set for the period 2020-2025. These support our commitment to providing an environment in which everyone has complete equality of opportunities and does not suffer any discrimination, whether directly or indirectly. The Public Sector Equality Duty as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristics

There are 9 Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act;

Age,
Disability,
Gender Reassignment,
Marriage and Civil Partnership,
Pregnancy and Maternity,
Race, Religion or Belief,
Sex and Sexual Orientation.

Equality Duty requires schools to consider how its activities affect the people who share these different protected characteristics.

Footsteps will aim to ensure that no student, volunteer, or employee, either current or potential, is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, cultural origin, religion, disability, experience of mental distress, HIV status, caring responsibility, class, education, employment status, political belief, or unrelated criminal conviction (this is not an exhaustive list).

Footsteps are committed to a programme of action to make this Equal Opportunities Policy effective. Our policy aims to ensure that no job applicant, student, employee user-

- Receives less favorable treatment on the grounds of disability, sex, or membership of any minority group
- is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

We will ensure that selection criteria and procedures are frequently reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and treated based on their relevant merits and abilities.

Associates will not be discriminated against in the advice and support they are given. Nor will they be denied access to opportunities because of their assumed abilities, skills or behavior and each person will be judged on his/her own merits. Footsteps will actively encourage and support young people to participate in the planning and implementation of their work.

Date of Issue: September 2024

Date of Review: September 2025

Recruitment and Selection

It is the intention of Footsteps that recruitment and student placement decisions are based solely on the relevant merits and abilities of candidates. Footsteps will require, therefore, that those involved in staff selection and volunteer recruitment do not discriminate, whether directly or indirectly, in the making of those decisions.

All applicants for posts and student placements within Footsteps shall be given as much clear accurate information in advertisements, job descriptions and interviews as necessary to enable them to gauge their suitability and compatibility for the post and the organization itself.

Recruitment literature shall not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants unless this is relevant to the post and specific exemption from equal opportunities legislation has been sought.

Vacancies for students and staff will be aimed at as wide a group of suitable candidates as possible.

Application forms, advertisements, and prospectus` shall be as clear as possible and shall not be phrased in too narrow or restrictive terms. The application forms for employment will be free of personal questions, particularly those about marital status and number and ages of children. Application and referral forms for student placement will require an element of personal information in order that Footsteps can best support them.

All potential students, employment applicants and prospective volunteers shall be informed that the organisation operates an Equal Opportunities Policy. Such information will be conveyed in all application forms and advertisements. A copy of the Policy Statement will be provided to all job applicants and prospective volunteers.

The Staff or Management who conduct the recruitment interviews will be trained to take an unbiased approach regardless of the applicants' race, gender, marital status, and to ask only questions, which relate to the job or volunteering opportunity, that are non-discriminatory. Questions relating to the following topics will not be asked at interviews - marriage plans, marital status, occupation of spouse, number and age of children, family intentions, religious or political beliefs, race/nationality, sexual orientation.

Training

Training and development opportunities will be given to any employee/volunteer wherever possible. Opportunities to discuss career development and training with the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Management Committee.

Every attempt is made to ensure learning materials, where possible, portray positive images of people while also reinforcing anti-discriminatory language and images of all individuals and groups.

Equal opportunities will be considered in all activities and resources. It is crucial that all volunteers can participate and enjoy the activities without discrimination.

Decision Making Processes

We aim to reflect the make-up of the community in the decision-making processes of Youth Action and will actively encourage members of groups suffering discrimination to be involved in the decision-making processes.

If the management committee or decision-making processes should be found to be unrepresentative Footsteps may consider co-options or reserved places for those who can make a special contribution. This will be fully discussed by all management committee members.

Consideration will be taken when arranging any meeting to ensure that it is as accessible as possible.

Sex Discrimination

The provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act apply to both Men and Women. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986 makes it unlawful, unless the job or volunteering opportunity is covered by an exemption, to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marriage. Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied which cannot be justified. Footsteps fully supports the Sex Discrimination Acts. This applies equally to students and staff at Footsteps.

Date of Issue: September 2024

Date of Review: September 2025

Direct Sex Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favorably on the grounds of sex than a person of the other sex would be in the same circumstances.

Indirect Sex Discrimination may still occur when a requirement or condition is applied equally to men and women. Such a condition may nevertheless discriminate against one sex because the proportion of one sex, which can comply with it is much smaller than the proportion of the other sex that can comply with it.

Marriage Discrimination occurs when a married person is treated less favorably on the grounds of marital status than an unmarried person of the sex would be in the same circumstances, this discrimination may be direct or indirect as explained above.

Sexual Harassment

Footsteps wishes to make it quite clear that sexual harassment is unlawful and views harassment very seriously. In particular, the welfare of all students is paramount.

The definition adopted by Footsteps is:

Repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks which are offensive to the worker involved, which cause the worker or volunteer to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised, or harassed or which creates a threatening or intimidating environment.

Racial Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person directly or indirectly in the field of employment. Footsteps fully support the Equality Act. Footsteps recognize the importance of every student feeling completely free of discrimination. Discrimination will never be tolerated and is totally against the ethos of Footsteps.

Direct discrimination consists of treating a person differently and less favorable on the grounds of their racial origin.

Indirect discrimination consists of treating everyone the same but in a way, which results in some people not being able to comply where others from another racial background can.

Demands of Religion (e.g., prayer times and religious holidays) and of culture (traditional dress) are accepted.

Racial Harassment

It is imperative that employees and volunteers are aware of legal commitments under Race Discrimination legislation and of its opposition to all forms of racism. Students are equally entitled to protection. Incidents include:

- Physical assaults/threats against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity.
- Racist insult/joke/name calling.
- Racist graffiti/any other written insult.
- Provocative behavior (e.g., wearing racist badges or insignia).
- Racial comments in meetings conversation/workshops.
- Attempting to recruit for racist organisations or groups.
- Racist literature (leaflets, comics, magazines) brought into the organization's premises.
- Providing a platform for racism.

Sexuality

Lesbians and Gay men previously had no legal protection against discrimination, but amendments to legislation now provides full protection against sexual discrimination of any type against any sexuality or gender. Footsteps are an equal opportunities organisation and are fully committed to the following policy provision. The sexuality of students should have no bearing on their experiences or outcomes during their education at Footsteps.

Footsteps will seek to overcome indirect discrimination by:

- Acknowledging the existence of Lesbians Gay men, transgender and transexuals either as employees, volunteers, or service users.
- Provision of information about relevant support organisations.
- Provision of regular training for all employees/volunteers.
- Offering training opportunities for our service users.
- Making clear its expectations of staff in the conduct of their duties in any circumstances where they represent Footsteps.

Date of Issue: September 2024

Date of Review: September 2025

People who are known (or perceived) to be Lesbian, Gay, transgender or transsexuals regularly experience harassment, verbal, or physical assault in many areas of their lives including the workplace. Footsteps will not tolerate this direct discrimination. This applies to students as much as staff or volunteers.

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 introduces new laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many disabled people face. Footsteps support the Equality Act. Students with disabilities may be accepted on the Footsteps programmed and will be treated equally and fairly by staff and peers.

It is against the law for an employer or voluntary organisation to treat a disabled person less favorably than someone else because of his or her disability, unless there is good reason. This applies to all employment matters (including recruitment, training, promotion, and dismissal.)

It is unlawful to victimise people or to knowingly help another person to discriminate. Footsteps wish to encourage opportunities for people with disabilities and/or mental health issues.

Monitoring, review, and responsibility

The management committee will be responsible for implementing the equal opportunities policy. Any complaint or grievance should be made to the Chief Executive who will deal with the situation or refer the matter to the management committee, whichever is the most appropriate.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES for 2020-2025

Schools are required to establish at least one Equality Objective to address any areas of inequality, or inequality, that we have identified through reviews and analysis of our activities, including our performance outcomes.

Our Objectives are set out below. Progress against these objectives will be monitored by SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and reported annually to the Governing body at which time they will be reviewed and updated, as necessary.

Curriculum Intent, Implementation & Outcomes:

- (1) We will close the gaps in attainment and progress between students and all groups of pupils; especially students from BAME heritage groups, students eligible for free-school meals, students with special educational needs and disabilities, and looked after children.
- (2) We will further equality and diversity through curriculum opportunities.
- (3) We will further support those students who have medical needs to ensure their access to education is not hindered due to their individual circumstances.

Personal Development

- (4) We will further the personal development of students including:
 - Reinforcement of Footsteps ethos and vision
 - Enabling students to access a range of extra-curricular opportunities
 - Furthering the commitment and aspiration of, and for, students.

Behaviour and Attitudes:

- (1) We will actively avoid stereotyping and promote a positive image of people with protected characteristics
- (2) We will promote cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school community.

Leadership and Management:

- (3) We will ensure that agreed capital building works continue to be planned in the context of improving any accessibility issues so that students and staff with disabilities may participate fully in all school activities.
- (4) We will ensure that the staff and governing body is reflective of the local community being ethnically, religious, and linguistically diverse. -----

Date of Issue: September 2024

Date of Review: September 2025