



**POLICY: Equality and Diversity Policy**

**Policy Statement**

The Loop recognises that our Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees, the organisations we work with in partnerships and people who use our services come from diverse backgrounds and each have different aspirations, needs, and experience life in different ways.

We strive to achieve fairness and inclusivity in all aspects of our work. We are committed to ensuring that the values of equality, diversity, and respect for all, are embedded into everything that we do to create a culture that respects and values difference.

The Loop is committed to equality for all and working towards ensuring that no individual or group is discriminated against in the planning or delivery of any of our services or activities. We will not tolerate the less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of their gender, sex, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, religious or other beliefs, or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

**Who this policy covers**

This policy applies to all Staff, Volunteers, Trustees, Interns, and Temporary/Freelance Staff, hereafter known as “The Loop Community”. Each party has a responsibility to ensure that their own language and actions are consistent with the spirit, as well as the contents, of this policy, and supports The Loop’s values.

1.	Principle and Aims
1.1	This policy is intended to demonstrate The Loop’s commitment to eliminating discrimination and encouraging and valuing diversity among users of our services and The Loop Community.
1.2	We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to meeting them in full. We believe that a culture that embraces equality and values diversity will help us to ensure that everyone feels involved and included in our plans, activities, vision and our future.
1.3	We aim to create an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour is tolerated by anyone towards anyone. This particularly applies concerning the ‘protected characteristics’ named in the Equality Act 2010: Age, disability, gender reassignment, income, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. See Appendix 1 for explanations.
1.4	<p>There are 4 types of discrimination covered by the Act and they are:</p> <p><b>Direct:</b> Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A protected characteristic they possess. This is ordinary direct discrimination. It is the only type of direct discrimination which may be lawful, but only if it is ‘objectively justifiable’; for example, only scheduling female staff for a women-only event.</li> <li>2. A protected characteristic possessed by someone whom they are associated with (such as a member of their family or a colleague). This is direct discrimination by association.</li> <li>3. A protected characteristic they are thought or perceived to possess, regardless of whether the perception is correct or not. This is direct discrimination by perception.</li> </ol> <p>Although there is normally a deliberate act or exclusion, direct discrimination is not always or necessarily intentional.</p>



	<p><b>Indirect:</b> Indirect discrimination is usually less obvious than direct discrimination. It can occur when a rule or plan is put into place which applies to everyone and could put those with a certain protected characteristic at a disadvantage.</p> <p><b>Harassment:</b> Harassment is ‘unwanted conduct’ related to a protected characteristic. It must have the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.</p> <p><b>Victimisation:</b> Victimisation is when an employee suffers a ‘detriment’ because they have done (or because it is suspected that they have done or may do) one of the following things in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an allegation of discrimination.</li> <li>• Support a complaint of discrimination.</li> <li>• Give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination.</li> <li>• Raise a grievance concerning equality or discrimination.</li> <li>• Do anything else for the purposes of (or in connection with) the Equality Act, such as bringing an employment tribunal claim of discrimination.</li> </ul>
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<b>2.</b>	<b>Implementation and monitoring</b>
2.1	The Loop is a service-user-centred organisation. It ensures that the services it delivers are relevant to service user needs and that they are accessible and appropriate, not only in terms of their delivery and design but also in their marketing and promotion.
2.2	The Loop understands that for equality to be achieved this policy needs to be understood and embraced by The Loop Community. Staff, volunteers and Trustees will receive information on Equality and Diversity as part of their induction and ongoing development. Members of The Loop Community must act to promote, be aware of and take responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in their behaviour with others.
2.3	Users of our services are also required to adhere to this Policy and act in accordance with the Policy. We will ensure that questions and information are accessible to all users of services, including information on how to raise a concern around any breach of the policy. Discriminatory language or behaviour by users of our services will be appropriately challenged.
2.4	We will assess new or revised policies and procedures, and all services and projects for their impact on equality and compliance with this policy.
2.5	We will actively work to ensure our recruitment practices and procedures are consistent with this policy. This will include the recruitment of all staff, volunteers, Trustees, interns, and temporary/freelance staff.
2.6	All trainers, facilitators, advisers, and others contracted to work for and with The Loop will be required to support this policy.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
3.1	Monitoring of the policy will be periodically reviewed by senior staff and trustees. This will measure the effectiveness of this policy, including staff and volunteers’ understanding of it, by accessing the information on grievances and complaints raised under the policy. Additionally, recruitment data and other demographic data gathered from the Diversity Monitoring Form, satisfaction surveys and any other staff or user insight will be periodically reported to the Board of Trustees.



3.2	The Loop will take a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and failure to comply with this policy will be addressed through performance management procedures, other relevant policies and codes of conduct (staff and volunteers), which may lead to disciplinary action or ceasing of volunteering. If unlawful conduct or practice is identified, The Loop will take action to report this to the police.
3.3	Where there is believed to have been a breach of this policy the matter should be raised through The Loop's Complaints or Grievance procedure (as appropriate). Where a breach of policy occurs, we will provide appropriate support to victims and witnesses, which may include making referrals to external agencies.

### Appendix 1 - Explanation of the Protected Characteristics

**Age:** An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

**Disability:** A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Gender reassignment:** A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. This includes transgender and non-binary people.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

A person who is engaged to be married is not married and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.

A divorcee or a person whose civil partnership has been dissolved is not married or in a civil partnership and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.

**Pregnancy and Maternity:** **Pregnancy** refers to the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby, and **Maternity** refers to the period of 26 weeks after birth. The Equality Act 2010 protections also cover a woman who has had a miscarriage.

**Race:** Race is defined as a) colour, b) nationality and c) ethnic or national origins.

**Religion or belief:** Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

A religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief.

A belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief. A "philosophical belief" must

- Be genuinely held;
- Be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available;



- Be regarding a substantial aspect of human life and behaviour;
- Attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance;
- Be worthy of respect in a democratic society, compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Any cult involved in illegal activities is not covered. Beliefs such as humanism and atheism would be covered.

**Sex:**

- a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a man or to a woman;
- a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same sex.

**Sexual orientation:** is a person's sexual orientation towards:

- people of the same sex as them (in other words the person is a gay man or a lesbian)
- people of the opposite sex from them (the person is heterosexual)
- people of both sexes (the person is bisexual or pansexual)

Understanding of these terms may differ between people and there may be differences b

**Sources:** Equality Act 2010 and Explanatory Notes to the Equality Act 2010, Ms R Taylor v Jaguar Land Rover Ltd: 1304471/2018