



Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

Playback Studio acknowledges that everyone is different and is opposed to any form of discrimination. Equality of opportunity is about recognising, respecting, and valuing the differences of diversity that we each bring to work, to learning and to volunteering. This commitment underpins and impacts on every area of activity and influences how the organisation works and what it does. Playback Studio recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons, which are not fair, just, or reasonable.

These include race, religion, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependents, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record. Playback Studio is committed to a Policy of Equality of Opportunity, which respects the identity, rights and value of each individual. Playback Studio is positively committed to oppose all direct and indirect discrimination in the organisation.

Access to this policy

This document will be made available to any learner, customer, employee, visitor or additional stakeholder that requests to see it. The policy will be available in either hard copy or electronic format.

A Glossary of Terms has been included at the end of the document to explain some of the terms used in this policy.

Our Vision

Playback Studio is committed to the principles of Equality and Diversity for its customers, employees, stakeholders, and visitors. Our vision for equality and diversity is clear; we want to achieve excellence through inclusion. Playback studio values for this policy stance are based on integrity, inclusion, transparency, and fairness of our service delivery to our learners and clients as well as the people we employ and interact with in the nature of conducting our work.

Playback Studio embraces equality and diversity through its values, aims and objectives, which are reflected in the actions and targets as set out in the range of plans and strategies Playback Studio has committed itself to.

The overall aim of this policy is to: -

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote equality of access; and
- Promote good relations between diverse communities

The Legal Framework

Playback studio acknowledges its responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects people who have a 'protected characteristic'.

The relevant characteristics are:

Age

Disability

Gender Identity (reassignment)

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality

Religion or belief

Sex

Sexual orientation.

The Equality Act was introduced on 1st October 2010, with staggered enactment. This act brings together over a hundred separate pieces of legislation, providing a robust legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have been replaced are:

Equal Pay Act 1970

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Race Relations Act 1976

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Equality Act 2006, Part 2

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Playback Studio will ensure that policies and procedures are compliant with any forthcoming legislation; Codes of Practice and guidance published by national equalities bodies and Commissions.

Types of Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person or group of people are treated on certain grounds less favourably than another.

For example, this might occur based on a person's age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, culture, sexual orientation, or other differences. It must be remembered that individuals can experience less favourable treatment for more than one reason.

There are instances when the law allows for people to be treated differently. This is when a particular requirement or condition is objectively justifiable e.g., where the holder of the job provides individuals with personal services and those services can only be provided by a particular sex or the same racial group.

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, associative, perceptive, intentional, or unintentional, and can be caused by individuals, groups, or institutions.

See the Glossary of Terms at the end of this policy for a more detailed explanation of different types of discrimination.

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on employers and service providers to make "reasonable adjustments" to accommodate people's disabilities. To promote diversity, we endorse the Social Model of disability which addresses the disadvantages faced by those with disabilities of whatever kind in employment, or access to our services and premises.

See the Glossary of Terms at the end of this policy for a more detailed definition of disability.

Institutional racism is defined in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report as "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping." At an Institutional level, prejudices become embedded in policies, practices, procedures and criteria for decision making. These discriminate with the effect of excluding some people in favor of others. This could lead to unequal treatment, inequitable distribution of opportunities, power and resources, which in turn could deprive some people of a better quality of life.

This collective failure of an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service or employment condition can also be because of a person's age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

At an individual level, a person may hold negative attitudes and use language that could result in inappropriate discriminatory behaviour or outcomes, which are unacceptable.

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Achieving Equality

Playback Studio will integrate equality of opportunity and respect for diversity into all aspects of its operational activity.

To achieve our aims, we will:

Positively promote equality of opportunity and respect for diversity within any leadership, management, or senior management role.

Promote a culture that will encourage all staff to challenge of all forms of discrimination (if observed), regardless of whether it was intentional, unintentional, institutional, or otherwise.

Undertake Equality Impact Assessments on policies, procedures, and service provision.

Engage with and listen to the views of our local communities, learners, service users, and stakeholders to assist in the development of our future equality agenda.

Incorporate equality of opportunity into all policies, procedures, plans and strategies from conception.

Develop services that are appropriate and accessible to all members of the community.

Provide appropriate training and development in equality and diversity issues for our employees and volunteers. (based on need)

Review, self-assess, audit and report progress annually on our equalities work.

Work to develop procedures to respond to and address all forms of harassment and victimisation.

Work with our partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to ensure the best outcomes for people who live, work and visit the communities in which we operate.

Equality and Diversity in Service Provision

Playback Studio's customers, employees, additional stakeholders, and visitors can expect:

The design and delivery of appropriate, accessible, and effective services to all members of the community.

To provide clear and accessible information about our provision in a variety of appropriate formats which meets the needs of all members of the community.

The use of effective systems for challenging, reviewing and monitoring our provision delivery and to ensure that quality and equality are continuously evaluated and improved and to ensure that all sections of the community are receiving fair access and outcomes.

Ensure that all our employees and volunteers understand what equality in service provision means by providing specific training (based upon need).

Engage with and listen to all sections of the community in identifying needs and communicating ideas



on the way Playback Studio delivers its provision.

Monitor and evaluate service up-take in relation to age, disability, gender and race.

Equality and Diversity in Recruitment, Procurement and Contracting

To ensure best practice and to promote our values Playback Studio will aim to: Ensure that contractors, suppliers, volunteers, and partners are aware of our position on equality and are clear about their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

Recognise and promote the application of national guidelines and advice, in line with our own contracting and sub-contracting procedures.

Make sure that our recruitment, selection and tendering processes positively address and include equality considerations that are in line with the procedures mentioned above.

Provide training for relevant staff in equalities issues for procurement.

Equality and Diversity at Work

Playback Studio is a local employer and as such recognises that a representative workforce provides greater sensitivity to the needs of our community. Therefore, we have a key role to play in tackling inequalities and discrimination in the workplace. To ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policies, procedures, and practices, we aim to:

Ensure that our employment, training and development policies, procedures and practices comply with this policy and do not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual.

Monitor our employment processes by age, disability, gender and racial group and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent.

Recruit employees in a manner which is fair and open.

Ensure employees are aware of their personal responsibility to apply this policy.

Eliminate discrimination in the provision of training and development to ensure that all employees can realise their full potential and contribute to the development of Playback studio.

Ensure that the content of all training and development activities reflect our commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity.

Promote a culture of fairness and respect in all employment policies, procedures and practices.

Take positive action to encourage under-represented groups to apply for posts or specific training.

Ensure pay structures reward all employees fairly, with an equal pay policy in place.

Recognise that employees have the right to work in a supportive, safe and harassment-free environment and all complaints are dealt with robustly.

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Make reasonable adjustments, wherever possible, to enable the employment and redeployment of staff with disabilities.

Consultation

This policy document outlines Playback Studio's commitment to consulting with a wide range of stakeholders including, customers, employees, business partners, the trustees and local community representatives, e.g. employers in order to make appropriate decisions in relation to the range and accessibility of the services we provide.

Playback Studio recognises that there are some groups of people we may not have engaged with over time and that their views may therefore be under-represented in any consultation exercises we have carried out. We recognise the value of gaining a variety of perspectives from our local communities and

we will:

Provide information in accessible formats and consider whether we can offer support for those who need help to participate in consultation we have organised.

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Provide practical advice, information and contacts for staff that are engaged in a consultation process, this will attempt to provide an inclusive element of all groups who should be consulted.

Use existing networks and community / partner organisations where appropriate to seek advice, views, and opinions.

Be creative in the variety of consultation methods we use;

Assess our success in reaching 'hard to reach' groups by including this as a criterion in our evaluation of consultation.

We will undertake regular employee surveys to measure satisfaction levels in relation to the working environment and the conditions we provide, and to ensure that we are continuing to develop and maintain an anti-discriminatory culture across the organisation.

A shared responsibility

Within Playback Studio all employees have a part to play in challenging discrimination and in implementing this policy. If anyone witnesses a discriminatory incident at work, they have a duty of care to others to challenge such behaviour and practice.

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Management at Playback Studio responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of this policy. All employees are responsible for promoting equality and are accountable to the senior management and the trustees for ensuring equality of opportunity and respect for diversity in all Playback Studio's provision, services, and employment.

All Directors are responsible for implementing the policy in their service areas, allocating specific resources to ensure the delivery of equality objectives in relation to service provision and employment. They are responsible for ensuring that their employees are adequately informed, trained and supported to ensure that their duties are carried out in accordance with this policy.

Managers and team leaders are responsible for implementing the equality in service provision and employment and for providing support for employees to work together to achieve equality. The quality department will be responsible for coordinating the development, implementation, review and evaluation of this policy and the Single Equalities Policy Scheme.

All employees are responsible for ensuring that they play their part in implementing this policy. They will also be responsible for improving their awareness of the barriers to equality in service provision and employment, for working towards the elimination of these barriers and for performing their duties in accordance with this policy. This expectation will be communicated to all new staff via organisational induction.

Any Contractors, Partners, Subcontractor's, Suppliers and Volunteers are to be made aware of our position on equality and be clear about their obligations to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Failure to abide by these requirements will be treated as a serious breach of trust and commitment. It is not necessary for the organisation to adopt the Playback Studio Policy document if their own document is of a comparable standard.

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Any breach of this policy will be dealt with through the Playback Studio disciplinary procedures. Serious offences such as direct discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be treated as misconduct or gross misconduct and in extreme cases may result in dismissal.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

Playback Studio will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy through consultation with customers, employees, and community representatives. This will include monitoring the extent to which we are meeting the aims as set out in this policy's action plan (see appendix 2) Progress will also be monitored annually against equalities performance indicators and targets

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The Playback Studio trustees will review this policy, at least annually, to ensure it is appropriate and responsive to relevant legislation. Progress made towards any set targets or goals will be monitored and reported each year to the Chief Executive.

How to provide feedback

Playback Studio welcomes feedback (comments, compliments, and complaints) on how well we are implementing this policy in the services we deliver to the local community. For general comments and compliments, or if you believe that you have been the subject of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation by Playback Studio you should first contact the Centre manager.

If you believe that a manager has unlawfully discriminated against someone or failed to treat someone with respect then you should contact the Chief Executive.

If a member of staff feels that they have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed, they should speak to their Line Manager in the first instance or if not appropriate, then to the Chief Executive

Any allegations of this nature will be taken very seriously, investigated, and appropriate action taken.

Appendix 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACTION PLAN

A practical and realistic plan, with an agreed timetable showing how the policy will be implemented and by whom.

AGE

The Government wants to prohibit unfair practices based on inaccurate assumptions, in order to remove the barriers which people of all ages face if they want to work or undertake vocational training.

ASSOCIATIVE DISCRIMINATION

Also known as discrimination by association, this is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. This applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex.

COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

A cohesive community is one, which enjoys:

A sense of belonging for all members of the community.

The different backgrounds of people are valued and appreciated.

Equal access to the opportunity's life presents.

Working towards developing relationships between people from diverse backgrounds in work, schools, and local neighbourhoods.

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DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

This is treating a person, without justification, less favourably than another, particularly because of one's feelings, assumptions or prejudices about the characteristics, attributes, or circumstances of that person. This can include certain forms of harassment or abuse. 12

DISABILITY The definition of a disability is broad: "A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and longterm adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day -to-day activities." Under the Equality Act, "substantial" is taken to mean "more than minor or trivial" rather than "very large".

DIVERSITY

Diversity literally means "variety". Valuing diversity means valuing people and recognising that everyone is unique/different but of equal worth.

EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides a cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern, and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

Much of the Equality Act came into force in October 2010, however other provisions in the Equality Act will come into force at different times to allow time for the people and organisations affected by the new laws to prepare for them. For the latest information about the Equality Act, visit the Government Equalities Office website.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

An EIA is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a council's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by ensuring that they reflect the needs of the community.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY This means treating people fairly without bias or discrimination, and always within the law. Everyone should be entitled to the same opportunities without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion/belief, disability, age or personal circumstances.

HARASSMENT Defined as: Unwanted conduct, which has the purpose of violating another person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION This is applying, without justification, a request or condition which, on the face of it applies to everyone but which in practice, forms a greater obstacle to a person, or group of persons, with characteristics, attributes, or circumstances.

MONITORING The process of collecting, analysing, and evaluating information to measure performance, progress or change.

PERCEPTIVE DISCRIMINATION Also known as discrimination by perception, this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. This

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applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

PREJUDICE Literally means “pre-judgment”, forming a view about a person in advance. For example, racial prejudice is having a negative opinion or attitude about an individual or group based solely upon their race or skin colour.

PROCUREMENT The contractual or other arrangements Playback Studio makes to obtain goods, works or services from an outside organisation.

RACISM All those ideas, beliefs, actions, customs, practices, and policies that have the effect of disadvantaging and/or discriminating against people because of their skin colour, culture or ethnic origin.

SINGLE EQUALITIES SCHEME A timetabled and realistic plan setting out how Playback Studio will meet its aims in this policy.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION This term describes what happens to people who are deprived of good quality housing, suffer unemployment, low incomes, poor health or live in areas of high-level crime.

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SOCIAL INCLUSION

This is when all members of the community have equal access to health, social care, and educational opportunities that many others take for granted.

UNWITTING RACISM This can arise because of lack of understanding, ignorance, or mistaken beliefs. It can arise from well intended but demeaning words or actions. It can arise from unfamiliarity with the behaviour or cultural traditions of people or families from minority ethnic communities.

VICTIMISATION Treating people less favourably because of action they have taken under or in connection with the new legislation – for example, made a formal complaint of discrimination or given evidence in a tribunal case.

WHISTLEBLOWING A procedure by which an employee of Playback Studio can formally raise serious concerns “in the public interest” about any inappropriate conduct/activities within the organisation, directly with the chief executive.

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Date of Origin	April 2014
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Next Review Date	January 2025
Authority	Directors
Responsibility	All Staff