

Forming Connections

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy



Last reviewed: 29/09/2025

Next review due: 29/09/2026

Policy owner: Education Director

Applies to: All staff, contractors, volunteers, associates, learners, and trustees

1. Policy Statement

At **Forming Connections**, we believe that everyone children and adults alike deserve to feel **safe, seen, and supported** in the spaces where they live, learn, and work.

We are committed to promoting **equality of opportunity**, celebrating **diversity**, and fostering a culture of **inclusion** in everything we do.

We recognise that true inclusion goes beyond compliance; it requires **systemic, relational, and cultural change**. This policy sets out our commitment to eliminating discrimination and creating environments where all individuals can thrive.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Affirm Forming Connections' commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
 - Comply with our legal obligations under the **Equality Act 2010** and related legislation.
 - Provide guidance for staff, learners, and partners on expected behaviours and responsibilities.
 - Ensure that our programmes, workshops, and consultancy services are inclusive and accessible to all.
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3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Public Sector Equality Duty** (where applicable)
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (in relation to protected characteristics data)

The **Equality Act 2010** protects people from discrimination based on nine **protected characteristics**:

1. Age
 2. Disability
 3. Gender reassignment
 4. Marriage and civil partnership
 5. Pregnancy and maternity
 6. Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin)
 7. Religion or belief
 8. Sex
 9. Sexual orientation
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4. Our Commitment

Forming Connections will:

- **Promote equality of opportunity** in all our activities, employment practices, and services.
- **Respect and value diversity**, recognising the unique contributions of each person.
- **Create inclusive environments** where everyone feels welcome, safe, and supported.
- **Challenge discrimination, harassment, and victimisation** whenever it occurs.
- **Remove barriers** to participation and learning wherever possible.
- **Comply fully** with equality legislation and good practice guidance.

These commitments reflect our core values of **Safety First, Sustainable Inclusion,** and **Relational Integrity**.

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, associates, contractors, trustees, and volunteers
 - All learners, workshop participants, and service users
 - All aspects of our operations, including employment, training delivery, consultancy, marketing, and partnerships
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6. Responsibilities

6.1 Organisation

Forming Connections is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed. Leadership will model inclusive behaviours and ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

6.2 Staff, Contractors & Volunteers

Everyone working with or for Forming Connections is expected to:

- Treat others with **dignity and respect** always.
- **Promote inclusion** in their work and interactions.
- **Challenge and report discrimination** or harassment appropriately.
- Complete EDI and safeguarding training as required.

6.3 Participants & Learners

Participants and learners are expected to contribute to a respectful, inclusive learning environment. Discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated.

7. Accessibility and Inclusive Practice

We aim to make our services and programmes **accessible to all** by:

- Providing clear, inclusive communication in multiple formats where needed and possible.
- Considering diverse learning needs, cultural backgrounds, and access requirements.
- Offering reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities or additional needs.
- Designing training and workshops that reflect a **whole-person approach**, not a one-size-fits-all model.

We welcome feedback and will work collaboratively to address barriers as they arise.

8. Recruitment and Employment

In our recruitment and employment practices, Forming Connections will:

- Ensure job opportunities are open and accessible to all.
- Use inclusive language in job adverts and communications.
- Shortlist and appoint candidates based on merit, skills, and potential.
- Make reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with disabilities.
- Promote professional development and progression opportunities equitably.

We are committed to building a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

9. Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment

Discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or bullying will not be tolerated.

Any incidents will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action, contract termination, or referral to external authorities where appropriate.

Incidents or concerns can be raised with:

- Education Director/DSL
- Through our Complaints Policy or whistleblowing channels

All reports will be handled sensitively and in line with safeguarding and data protection principles.

10. Monitoring and Review

We will regularly review our policies, practices, and feedback to:

- Monitor the effectiveness of our EDI commitments
- Identify areas for improvement
- Ensure compliance with evolving legislation and guidance

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

11. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Safeguarding Policy**
 - **DBS & Recruitment Policy**
 - **Complaints Policy**
 - **Data Protection Policy**
 - **Code of Conduct**
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Approved by:

Name: Brenda Keirnan
Role: Education Director

Date: 29/09/2025