

YouthBorders Equal Opportunities and inclusion Policy for service delivery

Part 1 Policy details

Commitment and scope of policy

YouthBorders is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and inclusion for all.

This policy applies to all aspects of YouthBorders public services including membership, events, training, communications, and projects. YouthBorders has a separate HR Equal Opportunities policy for its paid workforce.

Inclusion

YouthBorders takes inclusion very seriously, we aim to enable everyone to participate equally, and expect anyone working with or on behalf of YouthBorders to give this policy their full support.

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

It is the policy of YouthBorders to provide equal opportunities and ensure that no service user (employees and volunteers of member group, volunteers, training or event delegates and partner employees and volunteer) hereafter known as 'service users' are unlawfully directly or indirectly discriminated against on the basis of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.¹ In terms of our work, we expand this list to consider the needs of disadvantaged groups including care experienced people, carers, people from a lower socio-economic background or living in poverty, asylum seekers, refugees and the rurally isolated.

Furthermore, YouthBorders will ensure that no requirement or condition will be imposed without justification which could unfairly disadvantage individuals purely on any of the above grounds.

To create conditions in which this goal can be realised, YouthBorders is committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory policies, practices, procedures and behaviours. YouthBorders expects all our members, partners, delegates and volunteers to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

YouthBorders will avoid [unlawful discrimination](#) in all aspects of its services and communications.

Discrimination may take the following forms:

Harassment

YouthBorders defines harassment as any conduct related to the aforementioned characteristics that is unwanted by the recipient. It usually involves repeated acts of unacceptable behaviour but a single incident that is sufficiently serious can also constitute harassment.

¹ This list has been adapted from protected characteristics as outlined the Equality Act (2010).

Harassment is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions but includes suggestive remarks or gestures, images, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter based on the aforementioned characteristics.

Harassment is not acceptable under any circumstances. Every effort will be made to deal with alleged harassment on an informal basis in the first instance, where appropriate. Some types of harassment are classed as criminal offences that could lead to prosecution.

Bullying (including prejudice-based bullying)

YouthBorders takes incidents of bullying very seriously and will seek to address the root cause including any form of prejudice.

Examples of bullying behaviour include I. Insensitive jokes or pranks; II. Insulting or aggressive behaviour; III. Ignoring or excluding an individual; IV. Setting unrealistic deadlines; V. Substituting responsible tasks with menial or trivial ones; VI. Withholding necessary information; and VII. Constantly undervaluing effort.

This list is not exhaustive. The actions listed above must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the individual. It is the perceptions of the recipient that determine whether any action or statement can be viewed as bullying.

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control and respected. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online (Respectme, 2015).

Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice that relates to perceived or actual differences. This can lead to behaviour and language that could manifest as racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia or prejudice and discrimination towards disability or faith.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is when a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/ transgender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate them. This type of bullying relates to an element of a person's identity, targeting their 'inner being' and is therefore an example of 'prejudice-based bullying'.

Racist bullying occurs when someone is belittled, mocked, intimidated, vilified or shamed because of their physical appearance, ethnic background, religious or cultural practices or the way they talk or dress.

Part 2 policy details

Duties and responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the effective implementation and operation of the policy lies with the YouthBorders Chief Officer and the board of trustees. However, everyone who works in and with YouthBorders is responsible for ensuring that this policy works. We expect our members, delegates, partners, and volunteers to take personal responsibility for adhering to this policy's commitments and for promptly and appropriately drawing any breaches of the policy to the Chief Officer's attention.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

If any service user feels they have been discriminated against by YouthBorders as a whole or by a member of staff, they should raise this with the Chief Officer as a Complaint using the YouthBorders Complaints Policy.

The complaint will be investigated, listening to all persons affected. If the complaint is against the Chief Officer, then it should be raised with the Chair of the Board (chair@youthborders.org.uk).

YouthBorders will support people who feel they have been discriminated against and will not victimise or treat them less well because they have raised this.

Anyone who is bullied in relation to their work with YouthBorders may feel vulnerable and isolated and believe it is best not to complain as they may think that their complaints will not be taken seriously or fear the consequences of complaining. YouthBorders is committed to taking complaints raised seriously. The affected person must decide whether to ask for confidential counselling, and whether to proceed with a formal complaint.

If a criminal offense has been committed it will be reported to the police.

We record all incidents of discrimination ensuring confidentiality where needed and data protection.

Positive Action: Specific considerations relating to our network:

Rural isolation

Our members are spread across the Scottish Borders and public transport routes are limited. To allow equal access to our membership support services we do the following things:

- Our membership officer visits each member once a year at their premises. In addition, our membership officer is happy to travel to meet members, when necessary, at a convenient location for 1-1 support sessions.
- Training is offered online (or in hybrid format) so that travel is not a barrier to service users.
- When training/ events are in-person we will support members to share transport where possible.

Financial inclusion

Our network covers the whole of the Scottish Borders, an area of variable socio-economic backgrounds. Langlee in Galashiels and Burnfoot in Hawick are listed in the top 10% of the most deprived in Scotland, however, poverty is not limited to these areas, and we need to be financially inclusive across our network. To support the financial inclusion of our service users, and in particular our volunteers we will do the following:

- Most YouthBorders training courses are offered free of charge. Where there is a charge involved the cost should be covered by the member organisation and not the individual. If this is not possible then the individual or representative should contact our Development Officer who will support the member to find funding, subsidise the place, or remove the cost entirely.

- Travel to and from YouthBorders events and training by members and partners should in the first instance be covered by their organisation. If this is not possible then the member or delegate should contact our Development Officer for support.
- Travel to or from YouthBorders events, meeting and training by our delegates and volunteers should be reimbursed by their organisation. If it is not possible to pay the travel cost upfront before being reimbursed the delegate or volunteer should contact our Development Officer who will arrange for alternative payment arrangements.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the way we offer our services to prevent people with the protected characteristics set out above from being placed at a substantial disadvantage and make sure they have a fair and equal chance of accessing our services.

YouthBorders will always request from delegates at the time of booking for events and training if they have any support or assistance needs to enable their participation. This enables us to make reasonable adjustments in advance of their participation. Adjustments are made within the resources and capacity available to YouthBorders. Communication with the person/ people should be always maintained whilst the adjustments are being planned and made to ensure that we are informed of their needs and the positive impact of the adjustments required

Promoting best practice

Upskilling and Practice Sharing:

YouthBorders will, where possible, seek opportunities to upskill and share good practice with our users and members in relation to equality and inclusion.

This might include the provision of training, information via our e-bulletin, networking events or policy templates and toolkits.

YouthBorders is a LGBT Charter Mark association and in being so sets a positive example for our service users. The LGBT Charter makes a clear statement that equality and diversity are at the heart of our organisation.

Communications

Use of inclusive language: YouthBorders will use language which is free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views of particular people or groups.

Image choice: All images used will be reviewed to ensure they are representative, not only of our members, but also of wider society.

YouthBorders will work towards using descriptive captions and alternative text (also known as alt text) to allow people to visualize images when they can't see them.

Staff training: Staff training on inclusive practice/ unconscious bias will be reviewed through the staff CPD planning.

Equalities and monitoring

YouthBorders will monitor and record equal opportunities information about service users based on age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and postcode.

We will collect this data by asking participants to fill in an equal opportunity monitoring form at 10 of our training events each year.

The results of this data will be presented annually to the board.

We will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used for exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and have no bearing on opportunities or benefits.

Strategy

Equality and inclusion are part of YouthBorders communications strategy. YouthBorders will regularly review how we can reach a diverse audience.

Review

YouthBorders Board of Trustees will review this policy annually.



YouthBorders is a Company Ltd by Guarantee with Charitable Status: SC313338. Scottish Charity Number: SC037680

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