

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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1. Our Vision, Values and Commitment

At Likewise, our thinking and approach to equity, diversity and inclusion is underpinned by our core values of Learning, Belonging and Doing. We:

- * Treasure a vision of a community where we all feel a sense of belonging; every person who joins us– whether as a staff member, client, volunteer or supporter – can feel safe to be themselves.
- * Know that everyone is learning continually, and so our development of equity, diversity and inclusion will never be complete. We believe the richest learning we can do will be facilitated by hearing and reflecting on as many voices and experiences as possible, valuing and learning from what we have in common and what makes us unique.
- * See everyone’s active part in our equity diversity and inclusion practice, and want to involve and include people in this work. We believe we’ll learn & improve best by actively doing: experimenting, taking action, making change, and innovating.

Therefore, we commit to ...

- * Welcome the rich diversity of our community and encourage equity and inclusion for all.
- * Respect and value the humanity and dignity of every individual.
- * Listen and learn, being open to uncomfortable conversations.
- * Reflect and evolve in new ways to improve our approach.
- * Create a working environment where:
 - * individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued
 - * everyone feels respected and able to participate and contribute
 - * there is no bullying, harassment, victimisation and/or unlawful discrimination.
- * Aim for our community to be representative of all sections of society.
- * Value the role of deep listening, experimentation, change and innovation to develop our approach.
- * Proactively take action where necessary to ensure that we create an environment that matches our vision.
- * Approach ED&I from a person-centred, intersectional perspective that recognises the different strands of an individual’s experience.
- * Recognise that we’re never done learning and continue to hold ourselves accountable for making our vision a reality.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide an outline for how we provide equity, fairness and respect for all members of our community. This policy should create transparency around this and allow us to be held accountable for putting it into practice.

3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone working for or with Likewise, including trustees, paid staff, students, volunteers & professional partners [who will be referred to as “the Likewise team”]. It is expected that this policy and procedure will be read, understood and applied by all members of the Likewise team. There is also an attached procedure that forms the basis

4. Other Relevant Information

Our equity, diversity and inclusion policy and procedures are underpinned by English law and statutory guidance which includes:

- * Equity Act 2010
- * Human Rights Act 1998
- * Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR 2018
- * Mental Capacity Act 2005
- * Care Act 2014
- * Gender Recognition Act 2004

We are also learning from the following frameworks and examples of best practice to inform our work:

- * Restorative & transformative justice
- * Trauma-informed approaches
- * Active bystander training

We have a series of policies, procedures and working practices which are linked and work together to help create equity, diversity and inclusion across Likewise, which are available on the Policies slack channel or by emailing a request to contactus@likewise.org.uk. They should be read in conjunction with this policy and include:

- * Accountability and Care Policy
- * Complaints Procedure
- * Working Time and Leave Policies
- * Safeguarding Policy
- * Our Values and Approaches

5. Roles and Responsibilities at Likewise

5.1. EDI is Everyone’s Responsibility

Everyone working for or with Likewise is responsible for equity, diversity and inclusion. All members of the Likewise team and people using our space are expected to:

- * Help create a culture that upholds the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- * Be open to learning about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, to enable everyone to feel safe to be themselves, while acknowledging that mistakes are welcome at Likewise as a part of this learning.

5.2. Staff, Students, Volunteers and Professional Partners

Staff, students, volunteers and professional partners must:

- * Read and apply this policy and attached procedures.
- * Take complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and/or unlawful discrimination seriously and pass these on in accordance with the Comments, Compliments & Complaints policy & procedure
- * Record any incidents relating to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on VIEWS (see Appendix B for a copy of the incident report form)
- * Understand that they, as well as Likewise, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients, external staff and the public.
- * Proactively ask about and make reasonable adjustments to ensure participation of community members (including the Likewise team) is always possible where relevant, regardless of any need and/or difference.
- * Use curiosity and warmth to explore others' perspectives and lived realities.

5.3. The EDI Working Group

In Anyone involved with Likewise is welcome to request to join our Equity Diversity and Inclusion working group. Members of that group must:

- * Meet regularly to ensure they are upholding their responsibilities for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Likewise and discuss updates, changes, and ideas for best practice
- * Promote a positive equity, diversity and inclusion culture across Likewise
- * Commit to continued learning through a) dialogues about Equity, Diversity & Inclusion themes and challenges, and b) relevant training where there is opportunity to attend
- * Maintain awareness of changes in best practice guidance both at Likewise and in the sector for equity, diversity and inclusion
- * Provide a point of contact for advice and support on equity, diversity and inclusion matters at Likewise
- * Review employment practices and procedures regularly, and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law or best practice.
- * Ensure regular monitoring of the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender identity, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equity, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equity, diversity and inclusion policy
- * Monitor equity, diversity and inclusion incidents to identify emerging themes and possible actions needed
- * Assess how the equity, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, review them annually, and consider and take action to address any issues
- * Update and share information with the rest of the Likewise team and community on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion practice

5.4. The EDI Points of Contact

At any given time, there will be 2-4 allocated points of contact in the organisation who are able to meet the need for discussion and/or support for issues relating to equity, diversity and inclusion. They must:

- * Provide responsive support for those on the receiving end of ED&I incidents:
 - * Immediate emotional support, affirmation and empathy (responsive to incidents etc) & space to talk through feelings
 - * Exploration of what the person would like to see happen next and who they might need support from
 - * Signposting to next steps & supporting with these if needed
 - * Checking back to see if action has been taken, things have been discussed, and if any more support is needed
- * Facilitate a regular ED&I drop in space
- * Review ED&I reports that week to identify any themes/patterns
- * Hold intention around the ED&I perspective in the wider work:
 - * Holding the team accountable
 - * Checking in on how things are going
 - * Bringing a wider review of the ED&I work & discussion to the full team every 2-3 months

5.5. The Co-Directors

The Co-Directors must:

- * Oversee and keep up to date with the work of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion working group, and hold them accountable for meeting the responsibilities named in section 5.3
- * Manage complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and/or unlawful discrimination under the organisation's Disciplinary and Grievances Policy, and take appropriate action
- * Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so they can flourish and utilise their talents and resources
- * Ensure that decisions concerning staff including recruitment, promotion, and pay review are based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equity Act)

5.6. Trustees

The Trustees are ultimately responsible for the governance of equity, diversity and inclusion at Likewise, ensuring that the organisation is legally compliant. This includes:

- * Holding the Co-Directors accountable for implementing this policy

- * Hearing a report from the Co-Directors annually on the implementation of this policy, successes, complaints made, and recommendations for improvement.

6. Training, Learning and Development

6.1. Distributing This EDI Policy

This policy and procedure will be:

- * Made available at induction for trustees, staff, students, volunteers, and professional partners
- * Saved for everyone to access on the Slack channel #policies
- * Placed on the Likewise website

Staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy and are able to apply it when needed before conducting any lone work with vulnerable adults, or within two weeks of their start date, whichever is sooner. A record of this will be held centrally.

When an update is made to this document, this will be distributed to all staff via the Slack policies channel and staff should confirm that they have read and understood it within two weeks of receiving it. The central record will be updated accordingly.

6.2. Development

Likewise is a learning organisation, and staff should proactively seek opportunities to develop their understanding and perspectives on equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes:

- * Bringing and being responsive to open culture conversations about experiences of equity, diversity and inclusion at Likewise
- * Raising concerns, questions and points of interest around equity, diversity and inclusion during supervision or in other learning spaces
- * Seeking feedback from others in the community about their experience of equity, diversity and inclusion at Likewise
- * Reflecting on practices, both individual and organisational, and where necessary making changes to ensure the promotion of equity, diversity and inclusion
- * Being open to conversations about equity, diversity and inclusion when they arise, and taking these seriously
- * Attending training on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion where offered and possible, and proactively asking for specific support/training if needed

7. Appendix A: Definitions to Support This Policy

Equality:

Ensuring that everyone has the same opportunity to make the most of their life, whatever this looks like for them. At Likewise, this means people are able to access support, service, resource and opportunity regardless of their background.

Equity:

Giving people what they need so that equal access is truly attainable; making adjustments proportionate to people's circumstances so that opportunity is not just available, but truly accessible to those of different backgrounds.

Diversity:

Recognising that there are things in life that make us different from each other, and seeking to respect, learn about, understand and celebrate these differences.

A diverse organisation welcomes and includes people with a range of different values, abilities, perspectives, backgrounds, skills, experiences and thinking.

Inclusion:

Organisational and individual practice that creates spaces, services and relationships where groups and individuals with different backgrounds are accepted, welcomed and supported. A commitment to ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, as well as a means to contribute and have a voice.

Discrimination:

The unfair or prejudicial treatment of a person, or group of people.

Discrimination is against the law when it relates to protected characteristics (see below).

Protected Characteristics:

Markers of diversity that are legally protected against discrimination (Equality Act 2010).

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of:

- * Age
- * Disability
- * Gender reassignment
- * Marriage and civil partnership
- * Pregnancy and maternity
- * Race
- * Religion or belief
- * Sex
- * Sexual orientation

Hate Crime:

Met Police defines as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.'

Hate Incident:

Met Police defines as: 'Any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity.'

Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but it is equally important that these are reported and recorded by the police.

Evidence of the hate element is not a requirement. You do not need to personally perceive the incident to be hate related. It would be enough if another person, a witness or even a police officer thought that the incident was hate related.'

Hate Speech:

Any form of expression (e.g., verbal, written) through which speakers intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a person or group of people.

8. Appendix B: Incident Report Form

To complete this form, please view the full version at

<https://app.viewsapp.net/evidence/questionnaire.php?QuestionnaireID=74>