

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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2. Defining Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Equality is about treating all workers and job applicants equally, irrespective of gender, race religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, political views or disability. It is about tackling discrimination and dealing with inequality by ensuring fairness, decency, respect and high standards of behaviour between individuals and groups.

Diversity is the mixture of demographics and experiences reflected in the workforce, such as the number of people who identify as a certain group.

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Inclusion is recognising and valuing all employee perspectives and contributions. It means integration, a true sense of belonging. It has been described as fair and respectful and enabling people to realise their capabilities. It is about acceptance and valuing of differences, whether these relate to personal perspectives, style, approach, etc.

3. Our commitment

Coram is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and service provision. Coram believes that having a workforce with a rich mix of backgrounds, knowledge, abilities and skills enhances our ability to deliver high quality services to the broadest range of children, young people and families. Coram aims to build and maintain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities that Coram works within.

This policy is intended to assist Coram to put this commitment into practice.

Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

3.1 Coram's promise to staff and volunteers

- A safe, welcoming and inclusive workplace culture, where individuals are valued, respected and listened to.
- Equality of opportunity to access and benefit from professional and personal development activities.
- Support and guidance on challenging discrimination, prejudice, bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- A range of family friendly and flexible working practices that are accessible to all staff regardless of their age, disability, gender identity, marital status, parental status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, trade union membership or employment status e.g. part-time workers.

3.2 What Coram expects from the people who work for us

- To recognise and challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.
- To treat colleagues, children, young people and families, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- To listen to the variety of views and opinions of others, but to constructively challenge those who express views and opinions which may show a lack of respect, sensitivity or regard to others.
- To acknowledge and celebrate diversity, with colleagues, children, young people and families.
- To ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all children, young people and families to participate and be consulted, listened to and involved in activities designed to benefit them and improve the services they use.

In this document, 'Coram' is used to apply to all entities of the Coram Group.

4. The law

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment or service provision because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

Employees must also not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

5. Types of unlawful discrimination

Discrimination in employment and service provision happens because of prejudice, misconception and stereotyping which in turn hinders the proper consideration of an individual's talents, skills, abilities, potential and experience. It can be direct or indirect, intentional or not intentional. What is most important is that certain forms of discrimination are not just unfair they are illegal.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perceptive discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see associative discrimination below).

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed because they associate with another individual who possesses a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination or harassment against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Indirect discrimination can occur where there is a condition, rule, policy or practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination). Indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision made in running the organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful. Being proportionate means being fair and reasonable, including showing that you have looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision you make.

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual." It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct. Harassment applies to all protected

characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees can complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity), by third parties such as clients or customers.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

There is no longer a need for a complainant to compare their treatment with someone who has not made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act 2010.

Failure to make **reasonable adjustments** is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified. Treatment can be justified if it can be shown that it is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way. This form of discrimination can occur only if the employer knows, or can reasonably be expected to know, that the disabled person is disabled.

6. Promoting equal opportunities: employment practices

Coram will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Coram is committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the local community in which we operate. Coram's commitment to equal opportunities and a diverse workforce can be evidenced in the following specific areas.

6.1 Attracting suitable applicants

Coram will:

- Review person and job descriptions to ensure they do not contain any potentially discriminatory criteria that are not essential for the role.
- Avoid requirements relating to length of experience (which could discriminate against women or young people) and residence in the UK (which could discriminate on racial grounds).
- Where professional qualifications are relevant, make clear that comparable overseas professional qualifications are acceptable, if possible.
- Consider whether the job needs to be performed on a full-time basis or whether it is open to part-time working or home-working. Wherever possible, Coram jobs will be advertised with the statement that flexible working will be considered.
- Ensure all job descriptions include Coram's expectations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion

- Place advertisements in publications/media which are likely to reach all potential applicants.
- Incorporate an equal opportunities statement in all job adverts.
- Ensure that recruitment literature and advertisements avoid stereotypical images and language and make it clear that applications are welcome from all suitably qualified candidates.
- Ensure that agencies assisting in recruitment operate appropriate diversity policies and procedures when acting on behalf of Coram.
- Use an application form rather than a CV wherever practicable so that all applicants are competing on the same basis.
- Consider the availability and accessibility of application forms
- Ensure that recruitment solely or primarily by word of mouth is kept to an absolute minimum as this might unnecessarily restrict opportunities and could limit the diversity of the organisation.
- Monitor returns of application forms to identify any concerns in failing to attract a broad range of individuals.

6.2 Recruitment and selection

Coram will:

- Operate a blind recruitment process up to the stage of invite to interview
- Wherever possible, ensure short-listing is done by more than one person.
- Ensure that selection decisions are based on objective, non-discriminatory, job-related criteria, consistently applied to all candidates.
- Invite applicants to identify any special arrangements they may need at interview.
- Make reasonable adjustments for applicants to attend job interviews to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of his or her disability e.g. to time, location, tests.
- Ensure that all those involved in recruitment and selection have had appropriate training in recruitment interviewing, diversity and equal opportunities, or receive the appropriate guidance from Human Resources.
- Ensure that selection decisions for any post are taken by more than one person.
- Ensure that membership of recruitment panels takes into account, so far as possible, the range of candidates being seen.
- Not ask personal or intrusive questions, for example, relating to marriage plans or family intentions.
- Ensure that questions relating to a person's disability are only asked where relevant to the ability to do the job, with reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- Take particular care not to be influenced by any personal information that may be volunteered.
- Ensure that selection criteria and reasons for the selection or rejection of individual candidates are recorded. Interview notes will be retained securely by HR in line with data protection legislation.
- Ensure that the applicant is clear about what the role entails so that they can fully consider whether the job might conflict with their religious or other beliefs.
- Monitor the results of recruitment processes with particular regard for decisions which appear to be inconsistent.

6.3 Training and development

Coram will:

- Ensure that opportunities for training and development are made available to all staff on a fair and equal basis.
- Ensure applications for training courses and sessions are considered fairly.
- Train all those responsible for internally delivering training and development across Coram in equal opportunities and diversity issues.
- Ensure that all staff attend mandatory Equality and Diversity training within the first 6 months of joining the organisation (with effect from 2016)
- Ensure that diversity and equal opportunities issues are addressed fairly and equitably in all management-related courses such as competency-based interviewing, managing discipline and grievance, managing appraisals, coaching for high performance and supervision training.
- Consider whether the times at which training is provided might be discriminatory, particularly if training takes place outside normal working hours.
- Consider the cultural or religious requirements of staff e.g. dietary needs
- Consider whether any special arrangements need to be made e.g. wheelchair access.
- Monitor who takes part in training in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin and disability.
- Ensure external training providers are provided with a copy of Coram's diversity statement.
- Monitor learning activities across departments to ensure staff are not excluded.

Appraisals

Coram will:

- Ensure that annual appraisals are conducted fairly and are based on objective, written criteria and competencies.
- Ensure that all completed appraisals are reviewed and agreed by another manager (usually the appraiser's line manager).
- Act on learning and development needs identified in personal development plans.
- Retain notes of appraisals and discussions.

6.4 Promotion

Coram will:

- Ensure that opportunities for promotion are made known to all staff and are made available to everyone on a fair and equal basis.
- Ensure all candidates for promotion are considered against objective and consistent criteria. Written records of reasoning behind promotion decisions will be retained.
- Ensure that, where promotions are subject to internal references, verbal or informal references will be fair and non-discriminatory.
- Ensure that extended use of temporary promotion is discouraged where it will give one individual an unfair advantage over others.

6.5 Restructuring Processes

Coram will:

- Ensure that managers demonstrate ahead of any formal restructuring processes that they have given due regard to equality considerations and the impact on staff with protected characteristics.

6.6 Making reasonable adjustments and removing barriers for disabled people

Coram will:

- Make such adjustments as are reasonable to enable a disabled employee to carry out his/her duties. These may include, but are not limited to, provision of specialist equipment and training, job redesign, retraining, flexible hours, remote working and/or redeployment to a suitable alternative vacancy.
- Work proactively to remove barriers from the working environment for disabled people. This includes physical access to premises; access to benefits of employment; terms and conditions of employment; recruitment; and arrangements for recruitment, performance assessment, promotion and retention.

6.7 Religious observance during working hours

Coram will:

- Endeavour, on request, to alter an employee's working pattern so that breaks can be granted at times that coincide with their needs for religious observance.
- Alternatively, where appropriate, endeavour to grant employees reasonable unpaid time off during working hours for religious observance insofar as this is possible and practicable, taking into account the needs of the organisation and whether or not such arrangements might cause disturbance or disruption to other members of staff and/or their work patterns.
- Reserve the right to refuse to grant some or all of the time off requested, where an employee requests time off at a particularly busy time or at a time when the employee's absence would otherwise cause difficulties for the organisation, or where the amount of time off requested is unreasonable or excessive (taking into account the needs of the organisation).
- Treat all employees, whatever their religion or belief, equally in respect of requests for time off for religious observance or requests for alterations to their working patterns for religious reasons.
- Ask all employees, on a voluntary basis, to disclose their religion or belief to Human Resources so that any religious needs can be assessed and fair consideration given to what facilities and arrangements it might reasonably provide for staff.
- Provide food storage and food heating facilities. These are available to all employees. Employees must ensure that all food placed in the fridges or cupboards provided, is stored in sealed containers at all times. This is for the benefit of all employees, some of whom may wish to ensure that their food does not come into contact with, for example, pork or other meat products.

7. Service users, suppliers and other people not employed by the organisation

Coram will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using, or seeking to use, facilities or services provided by the organisation. As part of Coram's commitment to promoting social equality and justice, we undertake to ensure that our services are available to children, young people and

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families from the most disadvantaged sections of the community, and are designed to meet their needs. Coram aims to publicise its services in a number of languages and through outlets that reach disadvantaged groups within the community. Anti-discrimination work, such as translation, interpretation and the provision of other specialist support, will be undertaken as appropriate.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by service users, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

All contracts with suppliers, as far practicable, will include wording that ensures that those undertaking the contract understand the stance taken by the organisation.

8. Individual responsibilities

Coram aims to be an inclusive organisation where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and where there is equal opportunity for all. The co-operation of all those who work for or volunteer for the organisation, or who access Coram's services, is essential for the success of this policy.

8.1 Management responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all managers, from directors and heads of service to junior supervisors, to:

- Ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility;
- Familiarise themselves with the procedures in all equal opportunities documentation;
- Ensure that they are not instructing employees to act in a discriminatory manner;
- Ensure that they are not putting pressure on employees to discriminate;
- Bring the details of the policy and procedure documents to the attention of all staff;
- Ensure that information on equal opportunities is incorporated in all induction processes for new or temporary staff and is supported by ongoing training.
- Respond to allegations of discrimination and harassment fairly, quickly and effectively
- Prioritise their teams attendance at equality training to equip them with the competences needed to comply with this policy

8.2 Individual responsibilities

It is the responsibility of employees, volunteers and all those working on behalf of Coram at all levels to:

- Co-operate with any measure introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and avoid unlawful discrimination;
- Report any discriminatory acts or practices;
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- Not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination;
- Not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others
- Attend mandatory Equality & Diversity training

8.3 Breaches of policy

- Behaviour or actions against the spirit and/or the letter of the laws on which this policy is based will be treated seriously and appropriate action will be taken.

- Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or service users are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.
- Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

9. Grievances

If an employee considers that they have been unlawfully discriminated against, they may use Coram's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If the complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the bullying and harassment policy.

If a service user or someone working for Coram in a different capacity believes a Coram employee or agent has unlawfully discriminated against them, they should be encouraged to use the organisation's complaints procedure.

Coram will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. An employee will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Use of the organisation's grievance procedure does not affect an employee's right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months beginning with the act of discrimination complained of.

10. Harassment and bullying

Coram has a separate policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the organisation to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, Coram will monitor the age, ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

Coram asks all applicants and staff to complete a diversity monitoring form. The information provided will help Coram to:

- Develop and improve practices;
- Build and maintain equality of opportunity and diversity across the organisation, and;
- Demonstrate Coram's commitment to promoting equality and valuing and respecting diversity in all that we do as an employer and service provider.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

12. Other relevant policies

Coram's commitment to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity permeates our employment practices and the provision of all our services. This policy may therefore be cross-referenced with other Coram policies, including, but not limited to:

- Bullying and harassment policy and procedure
- Grievance policy and procedure
- Disciplinary policy and procedure
- Whistle-blowing policy and procedure
- Complaints policy and procedure
- Recruitment policy and procedure
- Training and development policy
- Redundancy policy and procedure
- Appraisal guidance
- Supervision policy
- Flexible working policy
- Maternity policy and procedure
- Parental leave policy
- Pay policy
- Retirement policy

Appendix A: Valuing Diversity Statement

Coram is committed to promoting diversity and providing equality of opportunity to its staff, volunteers and services users. Valuing the backgrounds, experiences and strengths of its workforce and clients is integral to the organisation delivering high-quality services.

Coram recognises that having a workforce with a rich mix of backgrounds, knowledge, abilities and skills enhances its ability to deliver high quality services to the broadest range of children, young people and families. Coram aims to build and maintain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it works within by accessing, recruiting and developing people from the widest talent pool possible.

Coram is committed to taking active steps to address and eliminate unfair or unlawful discrimination or prejudice where this is identified in the organisation's procedures or working practices. The organisation does not tolerate unlawful discrimination nor direct or indirect behaviours that are intended to bully, harass, isolate or victimise.

Coram shows respect for all its employees and volunteers, valuing each individual's contribution, regardless of their age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership status, disability, nationality, race, religion or belief.

Coram recognises that prejudice and discrimination continue to result in unfair treatment for many people. To address this and ensure the organisation's commitment to promoting diversity and providing equality of opportunity is embedded in its day-to-day working practices, policies and relationships Coram strives to ensure:

- The workforce understands and accepts their personal responsibility to recognise and value differences.
- All new starters attend Equality & Diversity training as part of their induction programme.
- The design and application of employment policies and practices (including recruitment, retention, promotion, training and organisational restructure) uphold and reflect the organisations commitment to valuing diversity and providing equality of opportunity.
- Barriers are proactively removed and reasonable adjustments are made for its disabled workforce and service users
- Services are delivered fairly and designed to suit the needs of the diverse communities it works with
- Services are available to children, young people and families from the most disadvantaged sections of the community. Coram aims to publicise its services in a number of languages and through outlets that reach disadvantaged groups within the community.
- Effective systems of quality and equality monitoring are set up to ensure that action on valuing diversity is continuously evaluated and improved.

Appendix B: Glossary

Age	This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32-year-olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30-year-olds, or people over 50).
Agent	A person who has authority to act on behalf of Coram but who is not an employee e.g. associate, contractor etc.
Disability	A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Diversity	Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences.
Duty to make reasonable adjustments	Where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, there is a duty to take reasonable steps to remove that disadvantage by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. changing provisions, criteria or practices, ii. altering, removing or providing a reasonable alternative means of avoiding physical features, and iii. providing auxiliary aids.
Gender reassignment	The process of changing from one gender to another
Marriage and civil partnership	Marriage is defined as “the legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship.” A civil partnership is defined as “a legally recognised relationship between two people of the same sex.” Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples.
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race	Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins
Reasonable	What is considered reasonable will depend on all the circumstances of the case including the size of an organisation and its resources, what is practicable, the effectiveness of what is being proposed and the likely disruption that would be caused by taking the measure in question as well as the availability of financial assistance.
Religion or belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be including in the definition.
Service users	Those accessing or using a particular service.
Sex	This is a protected characteristic. It refers to whether a person is a man or a woman (of any age).
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Unlawful discrimination	When an employer or service provider has engaged in prohibited conduct against someone with a protected characteristic (discriminated against them) and does not have a valid defence.

Appendix C: Amendments Summary

Date	Issue	Additions	Deletions	Amendments
December 2010	5			All sections amended in line with the Equality Act 2010.
October 2013	6			All sections reviewed, no amendments needed.
February 2017	7	P5: Requirement for staff to attend mandatory Equality & Diversity training	P3: Organisations liability for third part harassment – in line with provision being abolished in October 2013	P11: Definition of marriage
February 2017	7	P6: Detail of promoting equal opportunities through restructuring processes	P5: removal of reference to job share	
February 2017	7	P7: Further detail of managers responsibilities	P5 Reference of Guaranteed Interview Scheme	
February 2017	7	P10: Valuing Diversity statement	P8: Specific wording to be incorporated in contracts with suppliers	
December 2018	8			No amendments needed
December 2020	9	P1. Defining Equality, Diversity & Inclusion P4. Detail of Promoting equal opportunities: employment practices		