

Public Service

 **ombudsman**

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy

Version 3

August 2026

About this policy

At the Ombudsman, we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This policy sets out our vision to create an inclusive working environment and the role every colleague plays in contributing to it. This policy defines those responsibilities and expected behaviours, and how colleagues will be supported to make this vision an everyday reality. It also defines our commitments as an employer in line with legislation and the action we will take to address behaviour which contradicts our EDI approach.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone who works for us, including those on fixed term contracts, those on secondment from other organisations, as well as external contractors we work with. It encompasses how we treat one another and how we treat the people who use our service and our suppliers.

The Equality Act 2010

This policy aligns with the principles of the Equality Act 2010, and whilst our organisation is exempt from the statutory requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), we are committed to adopting its principles as best practice. We aim to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

Our commitment

EDI is a strategic priority with Board oversight of our activity. We monitor our progress using metrics such as our diversity demographics, recruitment, turnover, engagement, participation in EDI activity, and other related feedback.

We value having a diverse workforce, which brings with it diversity of experience, perspectives and ideas. This diversity enables us to better represent the public we serve, and when combined with creating an inclusive culture where people feel valued and respected, it generates a sense of belonging for those who work here.

We will not tolerate any form of discrimination based on protected characteristics. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Any behaviours, words or actions which amount to discrimination, harassment and victimisation will be dealt with in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy. We are committed to taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and will take proactive measures to create a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Further information about what we mean by discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and examples of what this may look like, can be found in our bullying and harassment policy.

Values and behaviours

We expect our colleagues to embrace EDI in line with our values and behaviours, by:

- respecting others, regardless of personal differences
- understanding the value that a diverse workforce brings with a range of qualities, backgrounds, and experiences
- constructively challenging and recognising others to make sure our EDI vision is lived out
- recognising unacceptable behaviour and taking appropriate action
- demonstrating an understanding of the EDI policy and our strategic approach to EDI
- participating in developmental activities relating to EDI.

Further information on the standards of behaviour expected of employees is available in the code of conduct and the values and behaviours page on OmbudsHub.

Raising concerns

Everyone has a responsibility to challenge, report or address discriminatory behaviour, victimisation, harassment, or bullying if encountered at our organisation. We expect our colleagues to take appropriate action either directly if comfortable to, or by seeking support to do so, for example from your line manager or a [freedom to speak up guardian](#). More information about available support and routes for raising concerns can be found in our [raising concerns route map](#).

If you experience harassment, bullying or otherwise unacceptable behaviour from people who use our service, please speak to your line manager who can provide guidance in line with our [respectful behaviour policy](#).

Learning and development

We provide training and development opportunities for all colleagues to enhance confidence and knowledge about diverse identities and experiences as well as evolving best practice, language, and behaviours. EDI resources and activities are shared and promoted regularly, providing further opportunities to learn and increase awareness and understanding of varied EDI topics.

Employee network groups

We are proud to have six employee network groups to provide a forum for people who have a passion for, or a connection with, a particular aspect of EDI. The aim of these groups is to provide networking opportunities and community support, organise activities to raise awareness and provide learning, and contribute ideas and suggestions for ways the organisation can be more diverse and inclusive. The groups available to all colleagues to join are:

- Carers
- Disability
- Families
- Gender equity
- Pride (LGBTQ+ and allies)
- Race, ethnicity and cultural heritage

More information, including how you can get involved, is available on the [employee network groups](#) page and each network's sub-page on OmbudsHub.

Equality impact assessments

Equality impact assessments (EIAs) are a tool to constructively assess whether we are having due regard to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in our decision making and activities. They help us make informed decisions, reduce risk and define what action we may need to take to mitigate impact or realise benefits.

As an organisation, we will consider how our decision making is likely to impact different protected characteristic groups. In line with this, colleagues are expected to consider whether an EIA is needed ahead of starting a new activity or when making changes to an existing activity. By activity we mean any policy, process, strategy, project, event and/or technology which would change the current or standard way that we work. A screening tool is available which will help you to determine if a full EIA should be completed ahead of an activity. Guidance for this process can be found on the [equality impact assessments page](#) on OmbudsHub.

Reasonable adjustments and accessibility

As a Disability Confident employer, we take action to make sure our workplace is accessible, both physically and digitally. This includes making reasonable adjustments to address barriers and provide appropriate support for disabled colleagues. Colleagues should discuss their needs with their line manager and make any requests for reasonable adjustments by completing a workplace adjustment passport. The passport serves as a way of documenting an individual's needs and how their current and future managers and the organisation can support them. Further guidance for this process can be found on the [workplace adjustments page](#) on OmbudsHub.

We will consider accessibility in advance of a recruitment campaign so that advertising, application forms, assessment and interview arrangements are appropriate and inclusive. We will ask applicants at the outset if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to the recruitment process, and consider requests we receive at any stage, and where reasonable, make adjustments to the process.

Transitioning at work

We will support transgender and non-binary colleagues through transitioning. More information about our approach to trans and non-binary inclusion, as well as practical guidance and resources to support people through transitioning can be found on the [transgender and non-binary inclusion in the workplace page](#) on OmbudsHub.

Policy information

Related policies and guidance

- Disciplinary policy
- Bullying and harassment policy
- Code of conduct
- Values and behaviours
- Freedom to speak up guardian
- Raising concerns route map
- Respectful behaviour policy
- Employee network groups
- Equality impact assessments
- Workplace adjustments
- Transgender and non-binary inclusion in the workplace

Version control

Date	Version	Amends	Owner of amends
December 2022	1.0	Final	EDI Lead
September 2024	2.0	Simplified policy, improved wording in line with best practice and plain English. Removed out of date organisational references.	EDI and Wellbeing Advisor
August 2026	3.0	Added linked information about employee network groups, transitioning at work, reasonable adjustments in recruitment, and raising concerns route map. Style guide changes and improved wording for clarity. Updated name references.	EDI and Wellbeing Advisor

Review date

Date	Owner of review
August 2028	EDI and Wellbeing Advisor