

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy (EDIB)



People & Culture Policies

TITLE: **EDIB Policy**

VERSION: 2

Authorised by: Executive Leadership Team

If the local statutory requirements in a worker's country provide greater benefits or protections than this policy, we will honour the local statutory and legal obligations. The UK policy will only apply where local statutory provisions offer lower benefits or protections to the worker.

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1. Introduction and scope

Cochrane's employees and workers are unique, whether in terms of background, personal characteristics, experience, skills or motivations. We value our people for the differences they bring to the work that we do, and we recognise that these differences – this diversity – is powerful.

Fostering an inclusive culture helps each of us to benefit from a wider range of different perspectives, experiences and skills. We believe that this creates a happier, more productive working environment for us all.

To support this inclusive culture, this policy seeks to:

- Clarify what we mean by Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (EDIB)
- Outline our commitment throughout the employment lifecycle to EDIB and sets how we put this commitment into practice
- Explains the behaviours we expect of our people in support of this commitment
- Sets out the key steps we take to make our culture as inclusive as possible

This policy applies to all employees/workers in Cochrane's Central Executive Team (CET). For individuals working with or on behalf of Cochrane, please refer to the Code of Conduct in *Section 10. Related Policies*. Most statutory requirements regarding the Equality Act and the Disability Discrimination Act fall within UK employment law and forms the basis of this policy.

2. Our Commitment

We believe that a culture of equality, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging not only benefits our organisation but supports wellbeing and enables individuals to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong. We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Cochrane's commitment to EDIB is championed not only at Executive Leadership Team (ELT) level but also at Governing Board level; with EDIB leadership involved in strategy development and action planning. The Head of People & Culture works closely with ELT and the Board to align policies, EDIB directives, strategic initiatives and positive action across all elements of Cochrane.

As a global organisation, embracing global identity and inclusion is extremely important although the legislation within this policy is UK based for the purposes of compliance with UK employment law.

We will ensure that our recruitment, promotion and retention procedures do not treat people less favourably because of one or more of the following:

- Disability
- Gender, gender identity or gender reassignment status

- Marital status
- Race, racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Paternity
- Educational or socio-economic background
- Caring responsibilities
- Employment status - part-time, fixed term, employee or EoR worker

3. What is EDIB?

EDIB stands for **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging**. Sometimes the 'E' is referred to as **Equality**. The bullet points below explain the differences between the two by providing context and we have chosen **Equity** because we believe this goes further than simply **Equality**.

- **Equality** – everyone is getting a pair of shoes
- **Equity** – everyone is getting a pair of shoes – that actually fits them

EDIB is about ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities for all, recognizing and celebrating our differences, creating welcoming environments, and fostering a sense of belonging.

4. Responsibilities

We expect our employees and workers to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying this policy to foster a culture of EDIB in all that we do. This is a shared responsibility to ensure we are creating the right environment. Cultivating an EDIB culture does not happen by accident but requires ongoing commitment and nurturing. The reality is that we live in a world where areas of difference (whether gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or others) often translate to biases, challenges and barriers that may not be faced by others.

The more areas of difference a person brings, the more this effect can be compounded. In this way, the experiences of a black woman with a disability may be very different to the experiences of a black woman without a disability and also very different from the experiences of a white woman. This way of looking at diversity and inclusion is known as "intersectionality". Sometimes, this may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute. By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, you can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.

It is the responsibility of all employees and workers to treat colleagues and third parties fairly and with dignity, trust and respect. Third parties include our beneficiaries and other community members, and employees/workers should familiarise themselves with our Code of Conduct (see Related Policies in Section 10).

5. Discrimination

Any dealings that you have with colleagues or third parties must be free from any form of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), victimisation or bullying. This includes any employee or worker discriminating against a Cochrane member.

We will take any action necessary against any employee or worker found to have committed, authorised or condoned an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying. This may lead to formal action under our Disciplinary Policy and, in serious cases, can result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

The Equality Act 2010 (UK legislation) prohibits discrimination under nine protected characteristics. These are:

- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Pregnancy or maternity

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may occur directly, indirectly, by association, or by perception. There are also two specific types of discrimination that apply only to disability: "discrimination arising from disability" and "failing to make reasonable adjustments".

Discrimination is not always obvious and can be subtle and unconscious. This stems from a person's general assumptions about the abilities, interests and characteristics of a particular group that influences how they treat those people (known as "unconscious bias"). Such assumptions or prejudices may cause them to apply requirements or conditions that put those in particular groups at a disadvantage. Examples include:

- Steering employees into particular types of work on the basis of stereotypical assumptions without considering the particular attributes and abilities of individuals;
- Recruiting or promoting individuals into particular roles because of assumptions about the reactions or preferences of other employees or clients; and
- Using different standards for different groups of employees to judge performance.

Different types of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 (UK legislation)

- **Direct discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that characteristic (for example

choosing not to recruit someone because they are disabled, and you think they "wouldn't fit in" to the team).

- **Indirect discrimination:** Where a policy, procedure or way of working that applies to everyone puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared with people who do not have that characteristic, unless there is a good reason to justify it. An example is introducing a requirement for all staff to finish work at 6pm. It is arguable that female employees, who statistically bear the larger share of childcare responsibilities could be at a disadvantage if the new working hours prevent them from collecting their children from school or nursery.
- **Associative discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example because their partner is transgender.
- **Discrimination by perception:** Treating someone less favourably because you perceive them to have a protected characteristic even if they do not, for example choosing not to promote someone because you mistakenly perceive them to be gay.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with that person's disability and where such treatment is not justified. Examples include:
 - Dismissing or failing to pay a bonus to someone because of their disability-related absence; or
 - Disciplining someone for losing their temper where such loss of temper was out of character and was due to severe pain caused by them having cancer.
- **Failing to make reasonable adjustments:** Employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employer's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failing to comply with this duty is unlawful. Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:
 - Allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague;
 - Changing their working hours or place of work;
 - Adjusting procedures for assessing job candidates; and
 - Modifying disciplinary and grievance procedures.

6. Harassment and sexual harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:

- Violating someone else's dignity; or
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.

Sexual harassment is:

- Conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- Less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

7. Victimisation

Victimisation is treating another person detrimentally either because that person has made a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or because they have supported someone else who has made such a complaint, for example by giving a witness statement that supports the allegations.

8. Bullying

Whilst under UK employment law there is no legal definition of bullying, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online or on social media. Bullying may occur at work or outside work. If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

9. Equity of Opportunity

Recruitment

We take reasonable and appropriate steps to encourage job applications from as diverse a range of people as possible. Anyone making a decision about recruitment must not discriminate in any way and must have attended appropriate diversity and inclusion training.

Decision-makers should challenge themselves, and other members of the recruitment selection panel, to make sure that any stereotypes, unconscious bias or prejudice do not play any part in recruitment decisions. Where possible support will be provided by the People & Culture team.

Career development

Any decision you make relating to a person's promotion or career development must be free from discrimination. The People & Culture team will ensure that any selection criteria or processes for recruitment and promotion are reviewed on a regular basis so that there is no discriminatory impact on a certain group. If necessary, they will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

Disability inclusion

The People & Culture team will consider disability in advance of a recruitment campaign so that advertising, application forms and assessments, arrangements for interviews, job descriptions and employee specifications, and selection criteria are appropriate and as inclusive as possible.

Candidates are asked at the outset if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to the recruitment process. If you are involved in the interview process, you must not ask job applicants about their health or disability.

Cochrane is proud to be a member of the Disability Confident Employer scheme which enables candidates, who meet the role criteria and who share they have a disability, to be receive a guaranteed interview for the post to which they apply.

Talking about disability

We understand that some people find it hard to discuss their disabilities and that disability can be invisible. Psychological safety, where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences, is paramount to ensuring disability inclusion. However, this is only possible if we treat people with dignity, trust and respect and we expect everyone to uphold these values.

We do not tolerate ableist language in our organisation. Ableist language is language that is negative, inappropriate or offensive towards people with a disability and may take the form of jokes or "banter". If you adopt such language, we will take action against you including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary Policy.

Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability, you do not have to tell us. However, we would encourage you to let us know so that we can support you, for example by making reasonable adjustments to our premises or to aspects of your role, or to our working practices.

If you are experiencing difficulties at work because of your disability, please contact your line manager in the first instance and they will seek advice from the People & Culture team. We may need to discuss your needs with you and your medical adviser to help us get the right support in place.

Support

If you have a disability, or you care for someone with a disability, and need emotional support or help with practical issues, please contact our EAP for free, confidential advice.

We also encourage you to speak with others who also have experience of disability and who understand the associated workplace challenges. You can make your voice heard and make a difference by helping raise disability awareness and understanding across the wider organisation.

Training

All new starters must attend EDIB training as part of their onboarding programme.

Employees and workers must attend regular training on EDIB, or refresh themselves on the EDIB Policy, on at least an annual basis. People & Culture policies are reviewed and updated every January.

Working Groups & Workstreams

We seek to proactively support our EDIB strategy by developing employee-led working groups to support EDIB initiatives. The aim of these working groups would be to identify events, webinars and other resources to improve EDIB across Cochrane and lead on educating colleagues on the challenges faced by others and how to help alleviate these in the workplace.

Some of these working groups may be focused inward i.e. for the workplace, and others may be focused outward i.e. Cochrane Community including volunteers, contributors, supporters and members.

Monitoring and review

The People & Culture team will analyse EDIB data (in compliance with GDPR) on a regular and ongoing basis to assess the impact of this policy, our EDIB strategy and any EDIB initiatives which we undertake as an organisation.

10. Related Policies

Disciplinary Policy
Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy
Bullying & Harassment Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Flexible Working Policy
Recruitment & Selection Policy
Learning & Development Policy
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Code of Conduct

[Principles of Collaboration: Working Together for Cochrane | Cochrane Community](#)