Policy Name:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	**Policy Number:**	SE007
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Introduction

SpecialEffect is an equal opportunities employer. The Charity recognises that it is essential to provide equal opportunities to all persons without discrimination. This policy covers all employees, job applicants, trustees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, career development, promotion and pay.

1. Statement

SpecialEffect is committed to valuing equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) through seeking to embrace and celebrate the unique differences every employee offers. We have zero tolerance towards any form of discrimination against any person on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or gender, sexual orientation, neurodiverse conditions, socioeconomic background, or part-time and fixed-term contract status.

SpecialEffect is a Disability Confident employer and is committed to ensuring that disabled people have access to employment opportunities within the Charity, by making reasonable adjustments throughout the application and onboarding process.

2. Principles

It is the responsibility of all employees in their daily actions, decisions and behaviour to endeavour to promote the following principles:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusivity in the workplace, ensuring individual differences are recognised and valued, and promoting dignity and respect for all.

- Help to create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination (unlawful or otherwise).
- Complete and engage with ED&I training annually, which also covers the topics of unconscious bias and microaggressions, to help in addressing subtle forms of bias and discrimination.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination by employees, service users, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of SpecialEffect's work activities.

HR Responsibilities:

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees.
- Review employment practices and procedures frequently to ensure fairness and update relevant policies to take account of changes in legislation.
- Monitor the employee profile of the organisation regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability, wherever possible to ensure diversity and inclusivity in our overall practice.
- Encourage all employees to feed back to continuously improve approaches to optimise individual and organisational performance at its best.
- Offer flexible working patterns and make reasonable adjustments where possible, with assistance from occupational health services, to support and embrace employees with diverse needs.

3. Commitment

In adopting these principles, SpecialEffect will:

- Commit to creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognised and valued.
- Commit to creating an environment which promotes dignity and respect to all — no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. Any instances of this will be fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action where appropriate (where relevant, please also see our Whistleblowing and Disciplinary Policies).
- Fully recognise its legal obligations under all relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- Encourage employees to pursue any matter through the Grievance Procedure on an informal or formal basis, where they are of a view that they have been exposed to inequitable treatment with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Selecting candidates only based on their ability to carry out the job, using a clear and open process, as outlined in the Recruitment Policy.
- Commit to establishing processes that support the mitigation of unconscious bias in processes such as hiring and promotion, such as using diverse job boards and structured interviews, and anonymising applications during shortlisting.
- Providing all employees with the training and development that they need to carry out their job effectively and provide progression opportunities where possible.
- Carefully consider whether any minimum or maximum number of years of relevant experience or certain qualifications are necessary for effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job-based reason for why they are necessary.

- Understand and emphasise the importance of reflecting the diversity of the wider workforce within the Leadership Team where possible. SpecialEffect commits to ensuring diverse perspectives are present at decision-making levels.
- Not operate with any compulsory retirement age, and each employee may choose for themselves when to stop working, subject to them continuing to be sufficiently fit to perform their job to a satisfactory standard.
- Distribute and publicise the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy throughout SpecialEffect and make publicly available on the Charity's website.

Any matters raised by employees will be dealt with under SpecialEffect's Grievance and/or Disciplinary Policy and procedures, and appropriate action will be taken.

4. Data Collection and Monitoring

The monitoring of employee data, particularly employee demographics, will be for the purpose of ensuring equal opportunity and informing diversity initiatives. This confirms that the monitoring of this data is to improve inclusivity rather than for any other reason of detriment to SpecialEffect employees.

SpecialEffect will ensure that any data shared by staff members, regarding their physical or mental health (eg medical reports, doctors' notes, self-certificates) will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).

5. Continuous Improvement

SpecialEffect ensures to regularly review and update this policy, at a minimum frequency of annually. This review will take in to account the following:

- employee feedback
- changes in legislation
- advancements in best practice and guidance

6. Related Policies and Guidance

- Disciplinary Policy (includes Grievance Procedure)
- Flexible Working Policy
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Training and Development Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy