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| Title of Document | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy |
| Name of Department | People Team |

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| What type of document is this? | Policy | |
| Which Helping Hands POL/SOP/W.I does this document relate to? | | Reference number of POL/SOP/W.I |

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| Which Operational Priority/Priorities does this document link to? | Governance Framework | Superior Client Care | People, Performance & Culture | Business Growth |
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| Custodian of document | Chief People Officer | Committee/Group responsible for this document | Policy Committee |
| Approval date and committee chairperson signature | 25.03.25 | When is its next scheduled review? | 25.03.28 |

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|---|----|
| Who does it apply to? | All Helping Hands staff | | | | | |
| | Does it apply to bank workers? | Yes | Does it apply to agency staff? | Yes | Does it apply to third party contractors? | No |

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| Purpose of the Policy | Helping Hands in all aspects of its work operates a policy of equal opportunity and equal access to employees and customers. All will be treated equally and with respect. It is our belief that no culture or religion is inherently superior to any other. We acknowledge and respect the diversity of our employees and customers. |
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| Role | Responsibility |
|-------------------------|--|
| Chief People Officer | Is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy and ensuring that the policy is communicated across the company through the Senior Management Team(s). |
| Helping Hands Managers | Is responsible for implementing and embedding this policy within all teams across the company. |
| Helping Hands Employees | Is responsible for adhering to this policy as directed by line managers. |

1. Purpose

This policy applies to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

Helping Hands is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and the inclusion of its employees and we value, fostering a culture that helps each of us to benefit from a wider range of these different perspectives, experiences, and skills.

Each of us is unique, whether in terms of our background, personal characteristics, experience, skills, or motivations. And we value our people for the differences they bring to the table.

We believe that this creates a happier, more productive working environment for us all.

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.

Definitions:

- **Equality-** providing equal opportunities and fairness for all employees.
- **Diversity-** refers to the range of people in the workforce and valuing employees' differences.
- **Inclusion-** inclusivity at work means all employees feel valued at work and feel safe to provide their ideas, raise issues or make suggestions.

2. Our Commitments

We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our organisation but supports wellbeing and enables our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong.

We are committed to ensuring a fair and inclusive workplace. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will not unlawfully discriminate against individuals based on any of the following protected characteristics;

- disability.
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status.
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation.
- age.
- pregnancy or maternity.

In addition to the above we would not treat people less favourably because of the below situations includes but not limited to.

- educational background
- socio-economic background
- caring responsibilities.
- part-time status; or
- fixed-term status.

We ensure that our practices, policies and procedures, and the application of these, do not unlawfully discriminate. This includes, but is not limited to;

- Pay and benefits
- Recruitment and selection
- Dismissals
- Requests for flexible working arrangements
- Access to training and development

We endeavour to monitor the structure of the workforce such as age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and encouraging employees to provide such information for monitoring purposes. This will enable us to review and take action to address any issues.

In this respect, employees with disabilities will only be prohibited from positions where the job duties involve activities which would make it impossible or inherently hazardous to perform.

By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, employees can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.

Any dealings with employees or third parties must be free from any form of **discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying**. Should an employee have a concern around these there are specific policies for these situations, which can be found on collaborate.

To report a concern of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying please contact your line manager or alternatively the People Team on hrhub@helpinghands.co.uk. you can also raise a grievance following our grievance policy. (Put Policy link here) . There is also a the confidential whistleblowing line on (01789 767 166) in which the complaint will be dealt with promptly and sensitively.

If any employee is found to have committed, authorised, or condoned an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or bullying, due to any of the Protected Characteristics we will invoke our disciplinary policy.

3. Discrimination

Employees should be aware that, as well as Helping Hands as the employer, employees can be held liable for discrimination and harassment. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may occur directly, indirectly, by association, or by perception.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

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.

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

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.

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.
4. **Part-time and Fixed-Term Work-** Although this is not a protected characteristic part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

5. Disabilities

If you have a disability, we encourage you to let us know so that we can support you, for example by making reasonable adjustments 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 to discuss potential reasonable adjustments that may alleviate or minimise such difficulties. We may need to discuss your needs with you and your medical professional to help us get the right support in place. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

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 employee assistance programme for free, confidential advice. Details of how to access this service are in our wellbeing policy.

6. Retirement

We do not operate a compulsory retirement age for our employees. We recognise the contribution of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. We believe that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so.

Should an employee wish to retire, they should discuss this with their line manager and provide notice in line with their contract of employment.

7. Protection and Support for those involved

Employees who raise concerns or who participate in good faith in any investigation will not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform your Line Manager. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Policy and Procedure.

8. Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

9. Data protection

When dealing with equality, diversity and inclusion, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our [data protection policy](#). In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

TRAINING

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| Is training required? | No |
| Details of training | Guidance can be sought from the People Team as and when required. |

COMPLIANCE

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| How is compliance with the POL going to be monitored | This policy will be monitored and reviewed when necessary, should process, policy, regulation or legislation change. |
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

| | Positive / Negative / N/A | Comments |
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| Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another on the basis of their: | | |
| • age? | Positive | |
| • disability? | Positive | |
| • gender reassignment? | Positive | |
| • pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)? | Positive | |
| • race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)? | Positive | |
| • marriage or civil partnership? | Positive | |
| • religion or belief? | Positive | |
| • sex? | Positive | |
| • sexual orientation? | Positive | |
| If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable? | | This policy promotes fairness for all employees, values employees' differences and promotes inclusivity where employees feel valued at work |
| If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative: | | |
| • Can the impact be avoided? | N/A | |
| • What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact? | N/A | |
| • Can the impact be reduced by taking different action? | N/A | |
| • Is there an impact on staff, client or someone else's privacy? | N/A | <i>If yes, privacy impact assessment required</i> |

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| What was the previous version number of this document? | 02 |
| Changes since previous version | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section on 'purpose' amended, removed unnecessary wording Amended section 2 'Commitment', reworded and ensure aligned with Helping Hands values Amended section 3 'Discrimination', reworded and added in Associative Discrimination and Discrimination by Perception. Removed details related to disciplinary – included 'sign post' to relevant policy. |
| Who was involved in developing/reviewing /amending the POL? | People Services Director |

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| How confidential is this document? | Restricted | Can be shared freely within Helping Hands but NOT outside |
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| References | |
| Associated Documents | |

Controlled Document