

National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH)



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (EDIB) Procedural Policy and Action Plan

Registered Charity No. 1190515

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1. WHY WE HAVE A PROCEDURAL POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging throughout our organisation, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

This procedural policy aims to outline specific steps to help support and implement our EDIB Policy Statement.

Also, NCCH wants to nurture and support the conditions for equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) to be embedded in wider creative health work and empower others to collaborate to advance change.

2. AIMS OF POLICY

The aim is for our organisation to be truly representative of our partners, service users and all sections of society and, and for employees, trustees, freelance staff, contracted workers, temporary staff, patrons and volunteers (aka 'associated personnel') of NCCH to feel respected and able to give their best.

We aim to make NCCH an inclusive organisation where everyone feels welcome and a sense of belonging, and that our work is relevant and meaningful to everyone who wishes to engage with us. NCCH aims to proactively reach out to diverse communities and individuals beyond our known circles of influence to strengthen the NCCH and make it truly effective. We aim to:

- 2.1.** Ensure our policy and plans are in-line with those recommended by the Charities Commission.
- 2.2.** Celebrate diversity amongst those who are accessing Creative Health activities, and to represent diversity through our online presence, resources and content.
- 2.3.** Ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of our activities, including with our staff, associated personnel, trustees and service users.
- 2.4.** Proactively reach beyond our networks to increase the diversity of our workforce.
- 2.5.** Work with accessibility, inclusion and belonging at the heart of decision making and in our core activities, including making reasonable adjustments to address barriers that prevent people from being able to access our resources, attend our events, or other barriers that make them feel that NCCH is 'not for them' and/or they don't belong.
- 2.6.** Be open to feedback, criticism and challenge and continually examine our work and organisation culture in order to understand where we need to make changes.

We will ensure:

- Equality, fairness and respect for all staff and associated personnel and encourage equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging throughout the organisation.
- No unlawful discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and (Amendment) Regulations 2023 : age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including a person's colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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- This unlawful discrimination also includes indirect discrimination claims which can be made by individuals who are not directly within the protected characteristic group but who suffer the same disadvantage as those who are.
- No unlawful discrimination with regard to pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
- Staff, associated personnel and trustees understand their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging policy. Responsibilities include staff, associated personnel and trustees helping the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and preventing bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Complaints are dealt with under the organisation's grievance and disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action is taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal or the requirement to step down from duties without notice.
- Staff, associated personnel, and trustees understand that sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence. Both the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 protects employees against sexual Harassment, and as such NCCH have a responsibility – a 'duty of care' – to look after the wellbeing of their associated personnel, as well as job applicants.
- Opportunities for training, development and progress are available to all staff, associated personnel and trustees, so that they are encouraged to develop their full potential and their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Decisions concerning staff, associated personnel, and trustees are based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

- Employment practices and procedures are reviewed and updated to take account of changes in the law.
- The organisation is monitored regarding protected characteristics to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion. Monitoring will also include assessing how the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy and any supporting actions, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and taking action to address any issues.

The Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging policy is fully supported by Senior Management and the Board of Trustees.

This core policy sits alongside NCCH's Code of Conduct Policy, Anti-Harassment & Bullying, Grievance and Disciplinary Policies.

Use of the organisation's Grievance and/or Disciplinary Policies and procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

3. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING CHALLENGES

- 3.1.** Ensuring that our core activities, meetings, events and resources are informed by issues around diversity, inclusion and belonging. For instance, considering topics and speakers at our events that resonate with, are relevant to, and represent people from different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, abilities and ages.
- 3.2.** Ensuring that our core activities, meetings, events and resources are accessible to those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mobility and sensory problems, Deaf individuals and BSL speakers, and people experiencing mental health issues. As these categories represent diverse challenges that can affect daily life and access to services
- 3.3.** Ensuring that the culture of our organisation, both in day-to-day working situations and at board meetings, is an accessible environment that can accommodate and respond to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds and living situations.
- 3.4.** Ensuring we consider digital exclusion in a time of increasing digital interaction, and aim to make our core activities, meetings, events and resources accessible in non-digital ways where possible.

- 3.5.** Ensuring we focus on how NCCH itself and NCCH's strategic influence can build and embed agency and equity, to help break down institutional and structural power imbalances which continue to drive inequity in creative health work
- 3.6.** Ensuring we concentrate on how we can be a positive ally in actively using our resources to challenge inequity in creative health work, and to focus on seeking opportunities to listen, collaborate and advance change.
- 3.7.** Ensuring we consider how to embed a sense of belonging in our own organisation, and the creative health sector as a whole, especially in regard to visible and hidden representation of diversity.

4. LANGUAGE

The term 'Creative Health' is not a familiar category such as 'arts', 'creativity' or 'culture'. We believe everyone has creative potential. We want to encourage creativity in all its forms and believe this will lead to healthier lives and communities. How we define and understand culture is bound up with barriers to accessing cultural and creative opportunities.

Labels and words can make people feel boxed in and discriminated against. Jargon can be a barrier. We will avoid acronyms and endeavour to use plain English and seek to be neutral in terms of identifiers in all our communications and take into consideration the following definitions:

- 4.1. Equality** means ensuring every individual has equal opportunities. NCCH will take a proactive approach to making reasonable adjustments that address the visible and invisible barriers people face.
- 4.2. Equity** means treating people in ways that make sure they are not unfairly prevented from accessing resources and opportunities. As providing the same opportunities to everyone does not ensure equality of outcomes.
- 4.3. Diversity** recognises we are all different in many ways. NCCH will take a proactive approach to diversity and focus on how NCCH can be reflective of the society we live in and the communities we serve.
- 4.4. Inclusion** means being proactive to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate.
- 4.5. Belonging** means being proactive in ensuring individuals are supported and feel a sense of connection and psychological safety within the organisation and wider creative health sector.

5. HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Health inequalities are a key priority for the NCCH, reflecting the wider policy environment within which we work. The increasing gap in inequalities was evidenced in Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On, published in February 2020, and the additional report Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review, published in December 2020 as part of the Health Foundation's COVID-19 impact inquiry.

Lack of access to cultural and creative opportunities too often mirrors other inequalities. Educational opportunities, quality of housing, employment and economic security, health and social care services, access to green spaces, and access to cultural and creative opportunities are all interconnected.

Working with communities, developing co-production methods with people who use services and developing culturally specific activities and opportunities are key to challenging inequalities in the arts and culture.

6. ORGANISATIONAL APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

6.1. Board of Trustees

On a yearly basis, the trustees will identify a range of skills and areas of knowledge that they consider important for delivering the charity objects and programme of work in regard to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

When recruiting and advertising for new trustees, NCCH aims to recruit trustees who meet the needs of the charity in terms of skills and knowledge as well as representing diverse voices and identities.

6.2. Staff & Recruitment

NCCH's advertising and recruitment process will adhere to this Equality, Diversity Inclusion, and Belonging Policy and will proactively encourage inclusivity by encouraging people to apply from diverse backgrounds and identities.

6.3. Advisory Group

The NCCH Advisory Group is made up of people who were involved in the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry and helped us shape the plans for the NCCH. When new people join this group it is an opportunity to ensure we are inclusive and diverse.

6.4. Creative Health Champions

Creative Health Champions are a group of individuals who have come together in response to recommendation 3 in the Creative Health Report, which called on all NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups (now established as Integrated Care Systems), to identify an individual at board level to take responsibility for institutional policy on arts and health. We will monitor this group with regard to diverse representation.

6.5. Special Interest Groups

We provide the secretariat for a range of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and will monitor membership with regard to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. We will discuss with the SIG Chairs on how the SIGs can promote equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging in their programmes of activities and in recruitment of members.

6.6. Partners

We will be open to working in partnership with a diverse range of organisations as the NCCH develops. We aim to work collaboratively and co-produce joint programmes with partner organisations.

6.7. Co-production and Experts by Experience

The NCCH aims to use and develop co-production methods in all their programmes and activities. People with lived experience of ill-health, who also have experienced the benefits of cultural and creative activities for their own health and wellbeing, can be invaluable allies and advocates in shifting the culture of mainstream health services. Their involvement in co-production can bring diverse and more representative voices, but it is important to work towards shared decision making and shifting the power balance.

NCCH therefore recognises that the engagement of individuals (including carers) with lived experience is critical to NCCH's work. Individuals who are willing to share their perspective, specialised knowledge, and experience can create an inclusive space to reduce stigma and discrimination, inform better understanding and learning, which results in more effective translation of research into better health outcomes.

In addition, our work tries to remove the barriers which low income can create, and to ensure that all individuals who want to contribute their personal and professional experience to NCCH can do so. Therefore, the expertise and expert contributions of those with lived experience have equal value to other NCCH stakeholders, and NCCH is committed to supporting paid involvement of individuals with lived experience who we

often refer to as 'Experts by Experience'. Due to this commitment we have created guidelines and support for 'Experts by Experience' <https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/NCCH-Expert-by-Experience-Paid-Engagement-Guidelines.pdf>

7. ACTION PLAN 2025 – 2026

- 7.1.** From January 2025, we have been undertaking an in-depth Review around Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging within NCCH but also in regard to sector wide Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging issues.
- 7.2.** We will develop a Creating Change Action Agenda and Plan to ensure NCCH has the capacity to support and foster initiatives and active partnerships.
- 7.3.** We will review website content and use of language to ensure we are communicating in plain English.
- 7.4.** We will ensure that any events and new resources developed by NCCH or in partnership with others, are planned and reviewed against the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Policy.
- 7.5.** When we recruit new staff we will ensure that we are acting on the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Policy at every stage. This will include actively highlighting recruitment opportunities to global majorities and under-represented community networks, for roles within NCCH and the wider sector.
- 7.6.** We will monitor equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging as we develop new groups such as Special Interest Groups and identify actions.
- 7.7.** We will be exploring existing models for co-production and exploring new ones through our programmes and regional Huddles, and this work will provide valuable opportunities for co-production with diverse and more representative voices.
- 7.8.** We will seek to offer additional support to those interested in collaborating with our Creating Change agenda who may face barriers to inclusion, to ensure spaces and conversations include small-scale organisations and individual voices.
- 7.9.** We will seek to convene open conversations and dialogue around equity, identity and diversity in creative health, to help bring people together to share knowledge, develop joint initiatives, and advocate for inclusion in creative health. These spaces/platforms will be for reflection and connection, as well as criticism and recommendations for growth.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.

The NCCH Director in conjunction with the named Trustee on this policy will review this policy every year and will make any changes necessary. All NCCH employees, Trustees, and associated Personnel are required to familiarise themselves with this policy upon their appointment to NCCH, and the Policy Owner will provide additional advice and support on this policy if requested by an employee, Trustee, or associated personnel.

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Review Date: July 2027

Policy Owner: Director of NCCH

Board Representative Approval: Professor Helen Chatterjee