

Date approved: June 2021

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

ILDS is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion across all its activities, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. It recognises that every person is an individual with different needs, preferences and abilities. It aims to reflect this diversity in everything it does, including making its services inclusive and accessible to all sections of society, and attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

The ILDS Board Members are committed for ILDS to be truly representative of all sections of society and our wider membership, partners and stakeholders, and for each employee, volunteer and any person on ILDS business to feel respected and able to give their best.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

There is no one complete set of agreed definitions for the terms like equity, diversity and inclusion. ILDS has adopted the commonly used definitions<sup>1</sup>:

- Equity means treating people in ways that make sure they are not unfairly prevented from accessing resources and opportunities nor that others have an unfair advantage. Simply providing the same opportunities to everyone is not an effective way to create equality of outcomes. Equality of outcomes highlights rather than giving everyone the same thing, it is about giving people what they need for fair access.
- Diversity means having differences within an organisation or setting. Diversity recognises we are all different in many ways. People with differing identities, backgrounds and experiences should all have equitable access to resources and decision-making. Some people prefer to use the term 'representation' to focus on how organisations should be reflective of the society we live in and the communities we serve.
- Inclusion means being proactive to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate. It is not only about creating a diverse environment but also about ensuring a culture exists where individuals can be their full selves.
- Equality means ensuring every individual has equal opportunities. By being conscious of and actively challenging bias or prejudice we make sure no-one is treated less favourably because of who they are or what makes them different from other people. This requires a proactive approach to make reasonable adjustments that address the visible and invisible barriers people face.

Since equity is about removing inequalities to make sure everyone has the chance to realise their ambitions, ILDS is focussed in achieving equity which is over and above equality. Accordingly, equity is ILDS' preferred definition and will use this approach across all its areas of work.

### **3. SCOPE**

The policy sets out ILDS' commitment to equity in all areas of its activities and applies to all ILDS Board Members, employees, volunteers, advisers, consultants, contractors, agency staff, agents, sponsors, or any other person or persons associated with ILDS (including third parties), or any of our grantees or their employees, no matter where they are located (within or outside of the UK). The policy is in line with the *Equal Opportunities and Diversity* policy in the Employee Handbook and covers more details which ILDS employees should refer to for step by step procedures. It is an overarching policy which covers the whole organisation's other policies and procedures.

In the context of this policy, third-party refers to any individual or organisation ILDS meets and works with. It refers to actual and potential clients, customers, suppliers, distributors, business contracts, agents, advisers, and government and public bodies (including their advisers, representatives and officials, politicians, and public parties).

The purpose of this policy is to not unlawfully discriminate under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

### **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

ILDS recognises the benefits of equity, diversity and inclusion. By respecting and pursuing diversity, it can maximise its impact through meeting individuals' needs and providing a relevant and positive influence in changing societies in which it works. Everyone working or volunteering for the ILDS or associated with the ILDS is expected to fulfil their personal role in making ILDS a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation.

ILDS has a commitment to diversity, which is about:

- recognising and valuing difference
- recognising and seeking to redress inequality and disadvantage
- treating all in a fair, open and honest manner
- recognising the right of employees, volunteers, any person or persons on ILDS business, its members, partners and other stakeholders to be treated with dignity and respect.

ILDS is committed to:

- equity
- equality of opportunity
- tackling discrimination and disadvantage
- tackling harassment and intimidation

- making its workforce and the organisation as a whole more representative of the diverse communities it serves
- providing information, instructions, briefing and adequate training to ensure implementation of this policy across the organisation
- encouraging its wider membership to adopt similar policies on equity, diversity and inclusion

ILDS will not tolerate less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, gender, gender reassignment, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, criminal record, place of residence, religion, faith or other beliefs, health status or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

ILDS will never use cultural practices as a justification for, or to ignore an issue of, safeguarding.

ILDS believes that discrimination is wrong and should be actively opposed as discrimination denies human dignity, a freedom for people to be themselves, and a place in a free society.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The ILDS Board has the ultimate responsibility to provide, implement and review the policy. It is the responsibility of ILDS Board, employees and volunteers to support the policy by ensuring that ILDS' activities promote equity, diversity and inclusion and challenging discrimination.

The Executive Director holds the day to day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented across the organisation and, in the first instance, for dealing with or taking action on disciplinary offences. In the event there is a breach of this policy by the Executive Director, the ILDS President will oversee the investigation and take the necessary actions required.

The Executive Director will report any breach of this policy to the ILDS Board so they retain oversight of the impact and implementation of the policy.

### **Equity, diversity and inclusion assessment**

As part of the implementation of this policy, all ILDS employees will carry out an equity, diversity and inclusion assessment for any services provided through their areas of work. This will help ILDS to ensure that all its policies, practices, events, decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

The assessment will also help to ensure that, when any adverse impacts are identified, actions are taken to remove or mitigate them and that decisions are transparent and based on evidence with clear reasoning. The assessment will cover both strategic and operational activities.

## **6. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY**

ILDS takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's activities. It takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be reviewed by the Executive Director and dealt with under the relevant ILDS policies and procedures. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice. If anybody associated with ILDS believes that they have suffered discrimination, the matter can be raised through the Executive Director and falling which, by ILDS President.

Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate. Complainants will not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination.

All employees, volunteers and any person or persons on ILDS business should understand that they, as well as the ILDS as an organisation, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination against fellow employees, volunteers, customers, suppliers and the public.

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<sup>i</sup> National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) guidance.