

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Training presentation for volunteers
January 2024

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Learning outcomes

Welcome to our equality and diversity training, which is designed to raise awareness of equality and diversity among all RNID volunteers.

- Understand the equality and the law including protected characteristics
- Understand the types of discrimination, including direct, indirect, harassment and victimisation
- Know how to treat others with respect and offer everyone fair access to opportunities
- Understand RNID commitment statement to equality & diversity

Introduction

Inequalities exist in society and that means it can exist in all sectors including charities.

Volunteers and staff may also experience discrimination, prejudice, and harassment because of who they are, and because of the groups and communities that they are associated with.

As a result of this, people are prevented from accessing opportunities and resources equitably.

Everyone deserves to be treated equally, fairly and with dignity. To achieve change, charities must recognise and understand how people are excluded and disadvantaged, and then change their ways of working and behaviours to become more inclusive.

As a charity that wants to make the world more inclusive it is important that we work together to understand the barriers that exclude people and work towards removing them.

Equality and diversity – what's the difference?

Equality is about ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.

Diversity is about taking account of the differences between people and groups of people and placing a positive value on those differences.



Equality and the Law

England, Wales and Scotland

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and updated a wide range of laws passed since the 1970s, to make things fairer for everyone. It sets out the personal characteristics that are protected by law, and behaviour which is unlawful.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

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

Equality and the Law

Northern Ireland

Equality areas covered are similar in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but Northern Ireland equality and anti-discrimination law is not consolidated into one single act.

Equality areas in Northern Ireland are:

- Age
- Disability
- gender/sex (including trans)
- Race
- Religious belief/ political opinion
- Sexual orientation
- Persons with dependants and persons without

Equality and the Law

If a person is treated badly or unfairly because they belong to a group that is defined by a protected characteristic, this may be **unlawful discrimination**. A legal case could be brought against the offender or offending party.

It is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have, or are perceived to have, a 'protected characteristic' or, are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.



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Let's look at each characteristic in more detail.



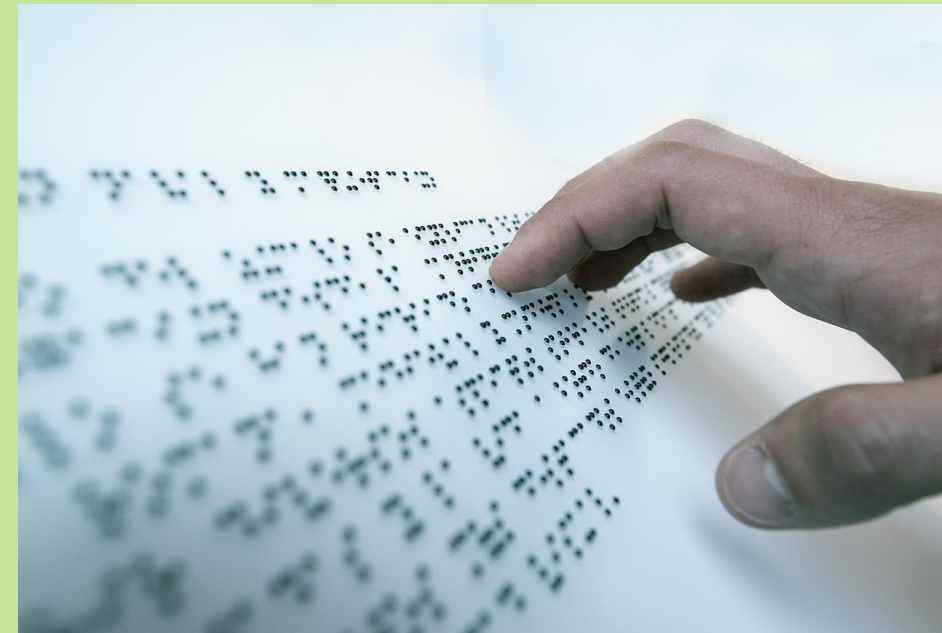
**Protected
characteristics**

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Not all disabilities are visible. Mental disabilities should be considered on the same level as physical disabilities. The term covers a wider range of conditions covering cancer, HIV/ AIDS, dyslexia, eczema and in some cases, obesity.

Around 27% of people in the UK have a disability. That's around 40 of your friends.



Gender reassignment

This refers to an individual who is proposing to, is currently undergoing, or has undergone a process to change their gender.

A person does not need to be undergoing medical supervision to be protected; someone who chooses to live as another gender without undergoing any medical procedures is still covered.

There is little data as to the number of trans people in Britain, but estimates suggest about 1.2%.



Pregnancy & Maternity

Pregnancy refers to being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth.

A common form of maternity discrimination is preventing women, or treating women unfavourably, from breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is legal, but many women worried about others responding badly.

It is illegal for anybody to ask a woman who is breastfeeding to leave a public place including cafes, shops and public transport.

Around 80% of women have children, so around 41% of people in the UK may be affected at some point in their life.



Race or ethnicity

This refers to a group of people who are defined by their race, colour and nationality, ethnic or national origins.

An individual does not have to be part of a specific racial group to be a victim of racism, it is all to do with the perpetrator's perception of the victim's race.

This has the potential to affect anybody in the country, as every individual has a nationality and ethnicity, however as ethnic minorities are most likely to be subjects of racial discrimination, we can estimate 14%.

That's about the same number of people who use an iPhone in UK.

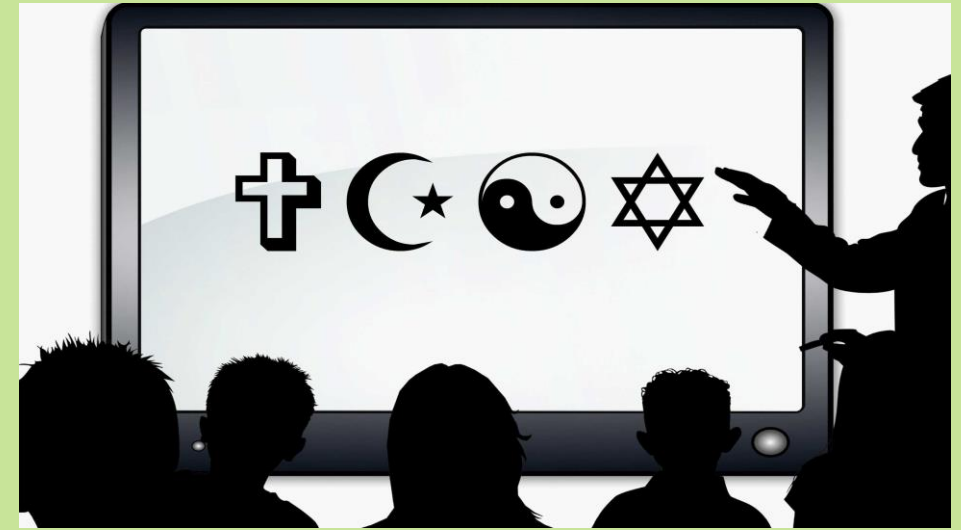


Religion or belief

Religion covers any religion and includes lack of religion.

Belief can include religious and philosophical beliefs and lack of belief.

Belief also covers things like animal-welfare beliefs or belief in the importance of climate change.



Types of discrimination to be aware of

Direct discrimination - when someone isn't given the same opportunities, respect, or conditions for volunteering or employment.

Direct discrimination by association – when people are treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they don't personally possess. For example, a discrimination because of an employee's association with someone who has a disability.

Direct discrimination by perception – This form of discrimination is where someone receives unfavourable treatment as others believe they possess a protected characteristic – even though they don't. For example, someone may look older than they are, and are discriminated against in recruitment.

Indirect discrimination – when people with a protected characteristic are put at a disadvantage because a rule, policy, or procedure excludes them.

- Unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic
- Has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity
- People can be harassed through language, written word or physical, including sexual



**What is
harassment?**

- When someone is mistreated because they have reported or confronted discrimination
- It is unlawful to victimise someone
- If a person reports discrimination, they are protected by law, even if it turns out to be a false concern



**What is
victimisation?**

Examples of discrimination and victimisation

When discovering that a colleague's daughter was in a lesbian relationship, a staff member made comments which were homophobic.

It is unlawful to make offensive comments about anyone based on their protected characteristics, in this case sexual orientation.

Jeannette goes to her dentist for a routine appointment. She experiences panic attacks as one symptom of her long-term mental health condition. She suddenly runs out of the dental surgery in the middle of her treatment. The dentist says she is not prepared to treat her anymore because of her behaviour. The dentist is refusing Jeannette a service because of behaviour related to her disability. This may be discrimination arising from disability.

Unconscious bias

We all have '**unconscious bias**' – prejudice in favour of or against one thing or group compared with another. This means we may judge and evaluate others or act differently to different groups of people.

It can be hard to accept our unconscious mind is biased, because we may feel that everything we do is conscious. Studies show 99% of detail is processed unconsciously every day.

You may feel like you are being attacked when you're told you have unconscious bias but remember that this is the case for everybody. Increasing your awareness is the first step to changing this and offsetting the impact of unconscious bias.



Example of unconscious bias

In 1969 in New York, a case of discrimination was brought against the Philharmonic Orchestra.

Orchestras are some of the least diverse institutions that exist.

In response the orchestra starting doing blind auditions, selecting based solely on merit.

As a result, the gender and racial diversity improved.



Raising concerns

RNID take all complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination during the charity's work activities seriously.

Discriminatory behaviour will be dealt with promptly under the RNID's procedures, and appropriate action will be taken.

If it constitutes a criminal act, the relevant authorities will be informed.

We have safe and confidential processes in place to support all volunteers, staff, and people using our services to raise concerns and report any discriminatory behaviour or injustice that they may experience in our charity.

If you have any concerns, please talk to your volunteer co-ordinator or your area Service Manager.



Additional resources

Equality, diversity and inclusion at RNID

A copy of RNID's full policy is available through your Co-ordinator by email or as a printed copy.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

THANK YOU!

RNID is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.
A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926).

**RN
I:D** | Supporting people
who are deaf, have
hearing loss or tinnitus