



Title	<b>Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy</b>
Objective	to provide transparency and accountability, to your entire company, about what constitutes fair treatment and what is considered discrimination, abuse, and harassment.
Issued By	Chief Executive officer
Endorsed by	Board of Directors
Applicable to	Executive staff, employees, interns and volunteers, contractors, consultants and other third parties carrying out activities on behalf of HPA
Contact	<a href="mailto:General@healthpovertyaction.org">General@healthpovertyaction.org</a>
Last updated	November 2023
Date of Approval	13 December 2023
To be Reviewed	November 2026
Related Policies & procedures	HPA Family and Dependents Policy HPA TOIL Policy HPA Health Poverty Action's statement of values HPA Staff development Policy

## Introduction

Health Poverty Action's statement of values begins:

*"**Equity** is the key to all our work. Health care is a fundamental human right which should be universally available to all according to need. Health Poverty Action recognises that there are limitations to the extent to which all needs can be met, but it affirms a commitment to the principles of universality and of inclusion of the most vulnerable and to ensuring **gender equity** in the operation and outcomes of our programmes."*

These values underpin not only our international health programmes, but the governance and management of the organisation. Health Poverty Action is therefore committed to challenging all forms of discrimination and prejudice, including sex, gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief; social class or caste, age, disability, political opinion, marital / parental status or sexual orientation. We will take steps with the aim of eliminating unfair disadvantage from all aspects of our work. Prejudice and harassment in any form will not be tolerated within Health Poverty Action.

The Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy was created to outline minimum standards of behaviour expected of those involved with Health Poverty Action, and outline mechanisms for self-reflection to

inspire the organisation to promote equity internally. The Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy is not intended to be static, but instead grow and evolve as ideas and best practices change.

## Vision

Be a model organisation, celebrating a widely diverse workforce and providing an inclusive and equitable environment for everyone, reflective of the communities in which we work and the values of challenging injustice that we promote globally.

## Strategic Goals

To achieve this **vision**, Health Poverty Action will:

- Create a safe and open working culture.
- Provide, wherever possible, the conditions for an inclusive working environment that does not reproduce inequity. Ensure that all people who work in Health Poverty Action are valued for their contribution and are given the opportunity to realise their full potential possible within the organisation.
- Achieve significantly more diverse representation across the organisation.

## Strategic Actions

Our **strategic actions** are about positioning Health Poverty Action to deliver our **strategic goals**. These **actions** ensure our people have the tools, knowledge, systems, culture and collective confidence needed in order to promote diversity and actively embed inclusion in their work. To enable us to achieve this vision through our strategic goals, Health Poverty Action will have:

- A Senior Management Team that drives and leads change in behaviours, processes, systems and approaches that enable diversity and embed inclusive practises across the organisation.
- Review Health Poverty Action's practices and policies to ensure we are maximising flexibility and support for staff, to encourage a diversity among people wanting to join the organisation and ensure they are able to stay. *For example, maximising flexibility for new parents, improving and maintaining virtual working for the Core Team to ensure people from across the world can work with the Core Team.*
- Reporting, business planning, and decision-making approaches that have a diversity and inclusion lens built-in to ensure Health Poverty Action makes fair and informed decisions and delivers inclusive and impactful programmes. This includes, ensuring there is no statistically significant difference in engagement scores across race, disability or sexual orientation.
- A learning culture and approach where diversity & principles, knowledge and skills are integral. This is to be achieved, by creating and maintaining spaces where staff are able to share ideas about how Health Poverty Action can improve.
- These values of diversity and inclusion integrated at the highest levels of leadership. By creating spaces for Trustees to discuss these issues, with avenues to implement change.
- Systems of safeguarding, whistleblowing and reporting of breaches of Equal Opportunities values that are continually monitored and reviewed to ensure maximum accountability and reporting.

## Policy

The Policy outlines agreed principles and practices adopted by Health Poverty Action. Health Poverty Action must:

### **A) Uphold the law.**

Health Poverty Action must ensure that job applicants, employees, consultants, volunteers or trustees do not suffer unlawful discrimination or receive less favourable treatment because of, for example, sex, gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief; social class or caste, age, disability, political opinion, marital / parental status or sexual orientation.

Are not disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable and are treated on the basis of their relevant abilities and merits.

And, so far as the law allows, to encourage positive action to promote equality of opportunity. To ensure that its procedures give individuals equal opportunity in recruitment, training, promotion and career development.

### **B) Provide training and development.**

Health Poverty Action has a Staff Development Policy, and managers have responsibility for its implementation. This policy covers activities which enable staff to continuously improve their performance in achieving the organisation's goals; enhance their opportunity for personal and professional satisfaction and growth within their work. Work plans and budgets will include processes and resources for identifying people's development needs and supporting these needs.

### **C) Maintain accountability and a zero-tolerance to breaches of this policy.**

All employees have a contractual obligation to apply the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy positively in all aspects of their work. Any proven instance of discrimination or harassment will be treated as a disciplinary offence, which may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including summary dismissal. Where employees consider they have been subject to discrimination or harassment, they should follow the steps set out in the Grievance Procedure.

Health Poverty Action reserves the right to terminate agreements and relationships with individuals or organisations that they later find out, do not adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy or share Health Poverty Action's **vision**.

### **D) Apply these values to recruitment practices of staff.**

Managers involved with recruitment and selection of staff, volunteers and consultants must ensure recruitment is carried out in accordance with good equal opportunities practice, as outlined in the Recruitment Procedures set out in Health Poverty Action's Managers' Handbook.

Health Poverty Action will consider, seek, and use the most effective ways of recruiting suitably qualified applicants from disadvantaged and under-represented groups. **Before advertising any posts, Health Poverty Action will consider whether the advertisement**

**should encourage applications from specific under-represented groups.** *For example, Health Poverty Action now includes a section on the application form which allows people to share their lived experience, so as not to exclude people who may be qualified but – for whatever reason – cannot show these qualifications through traditional educational attainment.*

Procedures set out in the Managers' Handbook enable those responsible for the recruitment and promotion of staff or the operation of disciplinary or grievance procedures to act in a manner which minimises the risk of discrimination.

All applicants are expected to demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities and an understanding of how to implement its principles in relation to the post for which they are applying.

There may be occasions when nationality or other factors have to be taken into account when appointing overseas staff, for example, due to regulations in that country. Any such exceptions will occur only after careful consideration in the light of the needs of the programme and will be subject to review as circumstances change.

There are variations between the detail of terms and conditions for staff working in different countries, but these will be within the framework of Health Poverty Action's values and principles adapted to local contexts, rather than a radical departure from them.

#### **E) Apply these values to recruitment practices of Trustees.**

Health Poverty Action recognises that individual members of disadvantaged groups are particularly under-represented at the highest levels of decision-making in society. Therefore, the CEO and Chair of the Board of Trustees aims to ensure that our Board of Trustees applies these principles of equal opportunity. This includes that they:

- Aim to maintain a healthy degree of diversity through appropriate advertising and selection methods.
- Before advertising any posts, will consider whether the advertisement should encourage applications from specific under-represented groups.

## **Measuring Success**

Monitoring the efforts of Health Poverty Action to reach our **vision** is key.

- The Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team, to reflect on the progress Health Poverty Action have made towards our **strategic goals**.
- Health Poverty Action will ensure that spaces for staff to communicate their views about the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy, remain open and accessible. As well as commit to taking all comments and suggestions seriously.
- **Please note:** as part of its monitoring of performance in the area of Equal Opportunities, Health Poverty Action might on occasions store information that is considered sensitive data under the Data Protection Act 1998, or personal under GDPR. Where this is the case, staff are informed through the Privacy Notice.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Outlines what is expected of people depending on their role within HPA:

- **CEO and Chair of Board:** Hold primary responsibility for recruiting new Trustees. They have a responsibility to integrate the values outlined in The Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy when recruiting new Trustees.
- **Senior Management Team (SMT):** Comprising senior managers and heads of departments, SMT have the responsibility to ensure the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy is implemented and scrutinised. They also hold responsibility to ensure staff and volunteers understand and apply this policy. Arranging training if necessary.
- **Managers:** Any member of staff that manages others has the responsibility to ensure the staff and volunteers they manage understand and apply the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy. Arranging training if necessary.
- **Staff, employees, interns:** Have a contractual obligation to apply the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy positively in all aspects of their work. Any proven instance of discrimination or harassment will be treated as a disciplinary offence, which may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including summary dismissal.
- **Volunteers, contractors, consultants and other third parties carrying out activities on behalf of HPA:** Must apply the Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy positively in all aspects of their work. Failing to do so, may result in Health Poverty Action terminating agreements.