



Review Date: 11th December 2026

PANDAS Foundation Equality and Diversity Policy

Our commitment at PANDAS Foundation to Equalities and Diversity

PANDAS is totally committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all of its service users, staff, volunteers and trustees. The organisation is opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, immigration status, language, appearance, caring responsibilities or other unjustifiable discrimination. See Appendix A.

This policy document spells out how we will endeavour to make our organisation accessible and welcoming to service users, staff, volunteers and trustees. We will make adjustments, wherever possible and within our financial resources, to enable full participation.

PANDAS will work to promote equalities and diversity in our recruitment, selection and employment practices, volunteer recruitment, selection and training, access to services, service provision, board membership and meetings, and publicity.

In order to emphasise our commitment to the delivery of this policy a Manager has been given the responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of our Equal Opportunity's Policy. The responsible Manager is Sally Bunkham, Director of Communications & Partnerships. All staff, volunteers and trustees are committed to implementing this policy.

We hope that all the PANDAS Team will take time to read this policy and let the Senior Management Team have any further suggestions or comments. They will be given urgent and serious consideration and a full response.

Annie Belasco, CEO of Charity & Sally Bunkham, Director of Communications & Partnerships

Our statement of principles at The PANDAS Foundation

Equality of opportunity for all sections of our workforce and the communities we serve is a core value of our charity. We exist to represent and provide services to all sections
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of the community in the UK. Everyone associated with us has a role to play in the promotion of equal opportunities through their work with colleagues and client groups as well as stakeholders.

We recognise that certain groups face discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexuality, religious beliefs and other unjustified reasons. This discrimination can arise from the practices of organisations and social institutions or the prejudices and negative attitudes of individuals. Discrimination leads to social exclusion of some people in these groups. To address these issues we all have a duty to ensure we act to remove discrimination from our policies, structures and practices and to promote equality in all areas of our work and influence. We are committed to a fair deal for disabled people, members of ethnic minority communities, elderly people, young people, women, the LGBTQ + community, asylum seekers and refugees, and other potentially disadvantaged groups by ensuring that our structures, policies, procedures and the behaviour of our employees are appropriate to the needs of all sections of the community. We will actively work to tackle discrimination in all its forms by promoting diversity, inclusion and equality.

At a time of dramatic change and increasing pressure on scarce resources, seeking and achieving equality of opportunity is of fundamental importance. Through its service users, staff, volunteers and trustees, PANDAS will try to meet the challenges in the workplace, in service delivery and all other areas we can influence.

The Law

We will comply with and, where it is reasonable, practical and proportionate to do so, go beyond the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, much of the Equality Act 2006, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 (where applicable, as subsequently amended), plus other ancillary pieces of legislation.

The Act defines nine protected characteristics –

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity



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- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

See Appendix A for definitions.

We are also committed to meeting our statutory obligations under the following legislation and codes of practice:

Humans Rights Act 1998

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Relevant European Legislation – such as the directives relating to work and family considerations

Employment Act (2009) and preceding statutes

This is a mandatory policy and should be known by everyone connected with PANDAS

Procedures

1. Trustees

1.1 Trustees are responsible for ensuring that The PANDAS Foundation meets its legal responsibilities, including those relating to Equalities legislation. All trustees accept and work to the Equality & Diversity Policy and monitor its implementation in our day to day work by receiving and analysing regular reports.

1.2 Membership of The PANDAS Foundation Trustee Board represents as wide a cross-section of our voluntary and community group membership and the communities we serve.

1.3 Trustees endeavour to ensure that the time, place and conduct of meetings enable all trustees and potential members to have an equal opportunity to be involved.

2. Employment practices

Recruitment and selection

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2.1 All job advertisements and job descriptions state that The PANDAS Foundation is committed to equal opportunities.

2.2 Job descriptions, person specifications and application forms are reviewed as each vacancy arises to ensure they are directly relevant to the post. Consideration is given as to whether the job can be shared and whether working hours can be flexible.

2.3 Application forms ask only for information relevant to the post.

2.4 All vacant posts are advertised widely including through community networks and forums in order to encourage applications from all sections of the community.

2.5 Information sent to applicants includes a job description, person specification detailing essential and desirable attributes and an equalities monitoring form.

2.6 Monitoring forms are separated from the application before short-listing and used only after the selection process for monitoring purposes.

2.7 Members of the interview panel have appropriate training and/or experience and reflect as far as possible the communities The PANDAS Foundation serves.

2.8 Short-listing and selection for the post is carried out objectively on job related criteria, specified in the job description and person specification. Trustees or staff with knowledge of a candidate will use only the applicant's application form to judge suitability for short-listing.

2.9 The person specification indicates which requirements are essential and which are desirable. Only essential criteria are considered in the first round of short-listing.

2.10 Interview questions relate directly to the person specification, job description and application forms. Questions are not varied according to the age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, sexual orientation or circumstances of any applicant.

2.11 Decisions taken at short-listing and interviewing are recorded. Feedback is made available to unsuccessful interviewees on request.



2.12 DBS checks are an essential part of the recruitment process. Our criminal records checks policy guides this process and takes into account the rehabilitation of offenders Act

2.13 Acceptance of the PANDAS Equality & Diversity Policy is a condition of employment and all employees must work to this policy.

Employment

2.14 The PANDAS Foundation terms and conditions of employment are set out in the staff handbook, with reference to equalities they include:

2.15 All new staff members receive a planned induction. The induction process is designed to meet the needs of the staff member and the post.

2.16 All staff have regular supervision and a standard format and guidance for these sessions is provided to all line managers. This format involves a section where staff can raise equalities and diversity issues. All staff have an annual appraisal, line managers are accountable to the CEO of Charity for the conduct of staff appraisals.

2.17 All staff are informed of the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure during induction. In addition all staff members are asked to provide a quarterly report to CEO of Charity within which they are encouraged to raise any equality and diversity issues.

2.18 PANDAS will ensure all staff receive equal and fair access to learning and development opportunities. We do this through our supervision and training request and evaluation systems. PANDAS will strive to meet training and development needs as appropriate within the capacity of our resources.

2.19 PANDAS will consider the individual circumstances of a member of staff within the scope of the Equality Act, providing the needs of our service are met. This may include actions such as reasonable adjustment to the employee's working environment or flexible working patterns.

2.20 PANDAS is committed to ensuring that all employees and volunteers have a workplace free from victimisation, bullying and harassment, the relevant policies and procedures and how to report incidents are contained in our staff handbook and are regularly reviewed and updated via our intranet system.



3. Service Provision

Our equality and diversity policy requires our service users, staff, volunteers and trustees to recognise and respect diversity within PANDAS's communities. To ensure equalities in service provision we will:

3.1 Ensure we take steps to make sure that everyone is aware of the services available and the standards they can expect. We do this through our website and our connections with community networks and forums.

3.2 We will make sure we find out, understand and consider the views, experiences, needs and hopes of our diverse user groups. We do this by undertaking regular 'help shape the future' surveys (for example the Community Survey of 2021 which helped inform our anti-racism strategy) and reviewing data about the changing make up of our communities

3.3 We will make our services available at times and places that suit the communities and groups we work with as far as is reasonably practicable.

3.4 When putting on training our events we will consider the diverse needs of our service users. We have an equalities checklist for training and events.

3.5 We require that all employees use their best endeavours to ensure that no one in his or her dealings with PANDAS suffers discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation because of their gender, gender identity, race, age, disability, sexuality or other unjustified reason

3.6 PANDAS will deliver training and development around anti-discriminatory and equal opportunities practice, both internally and for the benefit of community and voluntary groups.

3.7 PANDAS will provide access to up-to-date information and briefings about access and equality issues and practices, both for the benefit of its own staff and for community and voluntary groups that operate within the charity.

4. Access to Our Services

4.1 PANDAS will work to ensure our services reach disadvantaged groups by maintaining and developing positive links with a range of forums and networks representing diverse communities.

4.2 We will use plain language when publicising our services. We do not currently provide information in community languages, but we are committed to working with
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community groups and representatives to promote access. This includes promoting our services in a variety of ways, not just relying on the written word.

4.3 We will use positive images of different members of the community and disadvantaged people and ensure all images reflect the diversity of communities.

4.4 PANDAS is sensitive to the communication needs of individuals and groups / organisations we work with, and aims to meet these.

4.5 We make every effort to make sure our groups are accessible and take accessibility into account when booking external venues.

5. Working with volunteers

PANDAS volunteers are a valued resource. We are committed to always treat them with equality and welcome diversity.

5.1 All volunteers are expected to accept and work to the Equality & Diversity policy, a copy of which will be provided as part of the induction process.

5.2 Volunteers are recruited from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible, to reflect the composition of the communities we serve.

5.3 DBS checking is an essential part of the procedure for recruiting volunteers. Our criminal records checks policy guides this process and takes into account the rehabilitation of offenders Act

5.5 Selection of volunteers will be based on the experience and skills of each individual.

5.6 Volunteers' expenses (if required) are paid promptly on receipt of relevant documentation.

5.7 Regular support and supervision is provided to all volunteers in line with our policy.



5.8 PANDAS provides support to community and voluntary organisations in all aspects of working with volunteers including promoting equality of opportunity in volunteering.

Our equality achievements

We are proud of our equality achievements so far. We recognise that there is no room for complacency. The progress made must be protected and renewed commitment given to the development of new and innovative means of achieving and promoting greater levels of equality.

We recognise that all relevant groups, staff, volunteers partner agencies and community groups need to be involved in the development and implementation of this policy. Further we recognise that regular reviews of the policy must be undertaken to ensure the application of best practice equality.

We recognise the need to ensure all service users, staff, volunteers and trustees are fully aware of their own responsibility in respect of the achievement of equality of opportunity.

We will embed these commitments by the regular review and implementation of an equalities action plan, this plan contains our achievements so far and our priorities and actions for improvement. All staff are involved in this review and implementation and we will actively seek the views and input of our service users. Progress on the Action Plan is reviewed by the PANDAS board of trustees and Senior Team of Management Staff. The Action Plan is available on request.

Appendix A – Protected Characteristics – The Equality Act 2010

Age

An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. The Act protects people of all ages.

Disability

This protected characteristic defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The social rather than the medical model of disability is used in considerations around making a reasonable adjustment.



Marriage and civil partnership

The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination in employment because they are married or in a civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Gender Reassignment

The protected characteristic of gender reassignment for the purposes of law is where a person has proposed, started or completed a process to change his or her sex. A transsexual person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. A woman making the transition to being a man and a man making the transition to being a woman, both share the characteristic of gender reassignment, as does a person who has only just started out on the process of changing his or her sex, and a person who has completed the process.

Race

People who have or share characteristics of colour* (sic), nationality or ethnic or national origins, can be described as belonging to a particular racial group. A racial group can be made up of two or more different racial groups. A Minister of the Crown can amend the Act by order so as to add 'caste' to the current definition of 'race'. The term 'caste' denotes a hereditary, endogamous (marrying within the group) community associated with a traditional occupation, and ranked accordingly on a perceived scale of ritual purity. It is generally (but not exclusively) associated with South Asia, particularly India.*Colour includes being black or white.

Religion or Belief

This is the protected characteristic of religion or religious or philosophical belief, which is stated to include for this purpose a lack of religion or belief. It is a broad definition in line with the freedom of thought, conscience and religion guaranteed by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The main limitation for the purposes of Article 9 is that the religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief, such as Protestants and Catholics within Christianity. The criteria for



determining what is a 'philosophical belief' are that it must be genuinely held; be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available; be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour; attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance; and be worthy of respect in a democratic society, compatible with human dignity and not in conflict with the fundamental rights of others. So, for example, any cult involved in illegal activities would not satisfy these criteria.

Sex

References in the Act to people having the protected characteristic of sex mean being a man or a woman, and that men share this characteristic with other men, and women with other women. The Act protects both men and women.

Sexual Orientation

The protected characteristic of sexual orientation is defined as being a person's sexual orientation towards: people of the same sex as him or her (in other words the person is a gay man or a lesbian), people of the opposite sex from him or her (the person is heterosexual), or people of both sexes (the person is bisexual).

Definitions of discrimination

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably on prohibited grounds (gender/gender identity/race/disability/sexual orientation/religion or belief/age/socio-economic status) than another would be treated in comparable circumstances, where the treatment cannot be objectively justified (e.g. by a genuine occupational requirement). Direct discrimination is unlawful under all anti-discrimination law. Example: Failing to offer a man a job because he is gay.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages people of a particular group unjustifiably or disproportionately (where that group is by defined by sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age). Example: Requiring job applicants to have a set number of years experience may indirectly discriminate against women who have taken a career break.

Discrimination by Association



Discrimination by association is the form of discrimination that occurs when the discriminatory ground applies to a person, but another person is detrimentally treated in consequence. Sometimes, the phrase “transferred discrimination” has been preferred as a way of describing more accurately what has taken place within certain situations.

Discrimination by Perception

Discrimination by perception is discrimination against someone because he or she is wrongly perceived to have a certain protected characteristic, for example where an employer believes an employee is gay, or is of a particular race, and treats him or her less favourably as a result. This is unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

Appendix B – Sources of External Information and Support

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights – CEHR

0845 604 6610 - England main number
0845 604 6620 - England text phone
0845 604 6630 - England fax

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

ACAS

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461>

Employers Forum on Disability

<http://www.efd.org.uk/>

Age Positive

<http://www.agepositive.gov.uk/>

Employers Forum on Religion and Belief

<http://www.efbelief.org.uk/>

Stonewall – Campaign Group for the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community



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<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

Beaumont Trust – Registered Charity working for Transgender Equality

<http://www.beaumont-trust.org.uk/>

Gender Trust – Registered Charity working for those with gender identity issues

<http://www.gendertrust.org.uk/>

Fawcett Society – Working to eliminate discrimination between women and men

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/>

HM Government Office for Equalities – Secretary of State

<http://www.equalities.gov.uk/>

Appendix C

A report on Salford data will be inserted here soon to give some context, as Appendix C. This will include a summary of the data and the analysis.

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