

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY & PROCEDURE

OFFICIAL

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Policy

National Context

[Authorised Professional Practice](#) (APP) is produced by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. All officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. Essentially, our “policy” is to comply with APP as it develops to cover all areas of policing.

Rationale

Merseyside Police Force is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity in employment, where staff are treated equitably and where they can realise their potential. Equality of opportunity and inclusivity is fundamental to Merseyside Police and the principles of equality and diversity are at the heart of what we do and are supported by appropriate policies, procedures, good practice and the Equality Act 2010.

We will strive to make our workforce truly representative of all sections of our community and provide a workplace where each individual feels respected and able to give of their best.

All individuals will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability. All individuals will be encouraged to develop their full potential so that the combined talents and resources of the workforce are used to best effect.

We remain intent on serving all people in our communities with fairness and impartiality while developing our workforce in an inclusive way. We will encourage a common sense of vocation that increases our understanding and appreciation of people’s individual differences.

We will work continuously to earn the trust and confidence of the diverse communities we serve by delivering a policing service that meets their individual needs.

Aims

Merseyside Police celebrates and values the diversity of all staff and aims to ensure that all are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our community, and for each employee to feel respected. When we provide services in our community, we will ensure that we do not commit unlawful discrimination.

Objectives

A broad objective is to outline the standards that Merseyside Police Force expects and requires from its workforce. We will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Gender reassignment
- d) Marriage or civil partnership
- e) Pregnancy and maternity
- f) race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- g) Religion or belief
- h) Sex
- i) Sexual orientation

Merseyside Police oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:

- a) pay and benefits
- b) terms and conditions of employment
- c) dealing with grievances and discipline
- d) dismissal
- e) redundancy
- f) leave for parents
- g) requests for flexible working
- h) selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This policy applies equally to everyone working for Merseyside Police irrespective of their status within the organisation. It also applies to work related social functions outside working hours and to any event that has a direct link with the working relationship.

Any conduct that falls short of our expected standards outlined in the policy and the Equality Act 2010 is unacceptable. Anyone either conducting or condoning such behaviour will be liable to disciplinary action.

Evaluation

The Assistant Chief Constable of People Services will chair the Culture Board and will oversee the activities needed to deliver against strategic aims and progress compliance with the Equality act 2010.

Relevant information used to determine impact and progress will include but is not limited to equality analysis, grievance reports and diversity monitoring data.

Procedure

Version History

Version Number	Date	Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure.	Policy Owner Details	Policy Author Details
2.2	21/01/22		Head of Organisational Development, PS	Head of People Partners. PS
2.3	29/03/2026	Revised terms and naming conventions following implementation of Force Operational Review and 2025 Force Strategy; updated formatting to meet current Force standard template.	Head of Organisational Development, PS	Head of People Partners

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1 All personnel must have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunity and good relations between persons of different groups.
- 1.2 Managers and supervisors have responsibility to support and implement this policy, this includes ensuring that all their staff are aware of and understand the policy. When supervisors become aware of incidents that contravene this policy, they must take appropriate corrective action.
- 1.3 All managers have a particular responsibility to support the promotion of equality and by their actions to set a positive example.

2. The Equality Act 2010

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework and is the legislation that eliminates these types of unlawful action:
 - Direct discrimination
 - Indirect discrimination
 - Discrimination by perception
 - Discrimination by association
 - Victimisation
 - Harassment

2.2 This Act brings together for the first time all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public, and voluntary sectors need to follow in both employment and service delivery.

2.3 It affects equality law at work and replaces all previous equality law including:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

2.4 The law prohibits discrimination (both direct and indirect), harassment and victimisation in the workplace (see [Dignity at Work Policy & Procedure](#)).

2.5 Victimisation occurs when one employee is subject to detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so, or is about to do so.

2.6 The Act also protects people at work from being discriminated against because they are perceived or to be perceived to be associated with one of the protected characteristics below.

2.7 **Protected Characteristics**

2.7.1 The force will comply with legislation that protects people from discrimination at work based on certain protected characteristics listed in current legislation. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation.

2.7.2 Additionally, no individual (including employee or potential employee) shall be treated less favourably on the grounds of trade union or staff association membership or non-membership.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 All policies and procedures will be drawn up in accordance with the principals of fair practice and equality of opportunity and are subject to the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) .

4. Complaints

- 4.1 If an individual has a problem at work, there several places and/or people they can turn to for help. The most appropriate will depend on the circumstances. Individuals who feel they have grounds for complaint in relation to their treatment by the organisation or by individuals can raise the matter through:

- Line Manager
- People Services Service Centre
- Staff Associations and Trade Unions
- Staff Support Networks
- Professional Standards Department

- 4.2 The behavioural standards required may often be achieved by the individual and/or their representative challenging the person involved at the earliest opportunity and clearly stating to them that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop immediately. Further information and guidance to assist managers and staff to deal with these situations can be found in the [Dignity at Work Policy & Procedure](#).

- 4.3 It is important however to recognise that some incidents by their very nature will need to be dealt with through a formal procedure already established for Police Officers, Police Staff and Special Constables. If an individual believes they have been unfairly treated and initial contact with line management has not solved the problem, the [Fairness at Work \(Grievance Policy & Procedure\)](#) can be used. Ordinarily, this may only be invoked after normal informal dialogue has failed to resolve the complaint.

4.4 Representation

- 4.4.1 In accordance with the [Fairness at Work \(Grievance Policy & Procedure\)](#), individuals invoking a grievance will have a right to be represented by the Staff Associations, Trade Unions, friend or colleague¹ from Merseyside Police.

¹ Note a solicitor employed by Merseyside Police may not accompany or represent a fellow member of staff in such circumstances, nor is it appropriate for a member of staff to be represented or be accompanied by their spouse or partner.

4.5 **Confidentiality**

- 4.5.1 All cases will be dealt with in the strictest confidence, unless otherwise agreed with all parties involved. In cases of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, criminal and/or disciplinary proceedings may be instigated. As an organisation with responsibility to uphold the law, and as a major employer, Merseyside Police will not tolerate acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Such cases will be handled sensitively. However, there may be times and circumstances when it may be deemed necessary to forego anonymity.
- 4.5.2 All parties should be informed at the outset of the procedure, that the need may arise to breach confidentiality. Should the need arise for breaking confidence, for example, if an Employment Tribunal subsequently requires documentation to be disclosed, all parties will be made aware of the situation and the reasons for such disclosure.

4.6 **Sanctions**

- 4.6.1 All members of the Force (including volunteers), without exception, must observe the requirements of the Equality and Diversity Policy and its principles and positively promote and maintain an equalities and diverse culture. Merseyside Police will provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination harassment, victimisation and bullying. Failure to comply with this policy may be considered a disciplinary offence and may also be unlawful. Anyone either conducting or condoning such behaviour **will** be liable to disciplinary action. Where volunteers are involved, their services will be terminated.

5. **Service Delivery**

- 5.1 Merseyside Police is committed to fair and non-discriminatory treatment in the discharge of all its functions.
- 5.2 The Force's interaction with the communities of Merseyside must be undertaken in a fair and non-discriminatory way through consultation and co-operation. In the development of policies and procedures due regard will be taken of the likely impact on different groups.
- 5.3 The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all members of the Force to operate in a non-discriminatory manner. It also requires the service to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different groups. Information about Force services will be provided in a range of formats to ensure accessibility to a range of service users. The Corporate Assets Department are responsible for ensuring that appropriate physical access is available to individuals working and visiting Merseyside Police buildings and services.

- 5.4 Whilst the primary responsibility for delivering a non-discriminatory service rest with managers, all members of staff are individually responsible for ensuring that it is effectively administered. To achieve this, Merseyside Police will ensure that employees are trained as appropriate in the knowledge, awareness and development of skills required for them to produce a customer-focused performance and to facilitate a strong and committed relationship with the diverse communities that they serve.