

Effective Date: 17 March 2026

Version: 1.0

Approved by Board of Trustees – 17 March 2026

Horsham Matters is committed to encouraging equality and diversity; we will foster a supportive and inclusive culture for:

- All those who need and use our services.
- Our volunteers.
- Our staff.
- Other stakeholders.

1. The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, as well as for our volunteers
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 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 (gender) and sexual orientation.
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents/carers, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

2. The charity commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes making all employees and volunteers aware about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

3. Complaints

All staff and volunteers should understand they, as well as the charity, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, customers, suppliers and the public.

Horsham Matters will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's handbook and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Monitoring

Horsham Matters will record any incidents/complaints, which will then be investigated by the Chief Executive Officer.

Results of this monitoring will be discussed with the Trustees to identify any issues and develop action plans.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed each year or sooner in the light of emerging legislation or best practice that could impact on this policy.