

Equality, diversity and inclusion statement and framework

1. Policy statement

We believe that the ability to communicate is a fundamental right and that society will only be fair when everyone has the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills they need to fulfil their potential. We believe that literacy skills strengthen communities, enabling identities to be celebrated and facilitating empathy, giving people a chance to tell their stories and hear and understand the stories of others.

We recognise the relationship between literacy and a number of characteristics including gender identity, disability, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. These characteristics are also related to wider patterns of inequality and exclusion. We believe that addressing literacy can help address these experiences of inequality. Literacy is a social justice issue. Therefore, our mission – to give children and young people from disadvantaged communities the literacy skills to succeed in life – explicitly addresses inequality. The stronger our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, the more effective we will be in addressing our mission.

We promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the design and delivery of all our work. Our programmes and campaigns are focused on the needs of children, families, adults and groups who are most likely to experience injustice and exclusion. We work with communities to co-create solutions in which they can fully participate – ensuring that there are no barriers to their full participation. We develop approaches based on the many strengths and unique qualities they have – languages, stories, experiences, skills and knowledge.

Our approach means we are leading the way in addressing social disadvantage, and this extends to our role as an employer too. Our people are our most important asset and we value and respect diversity in all its forms (seen and unseen). We are committed to promoting equal opportunities, preventing unlawful discrimination and building a diverse and inclusive workplace. We know that greater diversity among our workforce will lead to an even greater impact for our work.

We encourage a flexible working approach that allows people to work in a way that recognises everybody's uniqueness and promotes a workplace where all staff can be themselves and contribute to our success, whoever they are.

We believe that it is important that the communities we work with can identify with us and recognise themselves in our staff. We want to work with them to develop the leadership, experience and knowledge they need within their own community. With this in mind, we recruit from within these communities to best connect with and understand the need.

We are also committed to providing training, mentoring and support to help us bring new perspectives and experiences into the organisation, and ensure that our staff have the skills and understanding they need to talk confidently about the challenges communities face and our role in addressing them.

We work to ensure that, as well as fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics it outlines, all our policies support our commitment to building an inclusive and diverse workforce, with equal opportunities for success. Our policies, training and development activity reflect the commitments outlined in this statement, as well as our obligations under the law.

2. The Framework

The National Literacy Trust fulfils its equality, diversity and inclusion policy statement through the way we live out our values of being focused, enterprising and connecting. The following Framework describes the behaviours which we want to foster.

We will use this Framework to plan, appraise, challenge and celebrate our behaviours. It will be used to support our annual strategy review, our business planning and the development of team plans. It will also be used for appraisals and to audit and plan for improvements.

The Framework takes each of our three values, explains each one, and then describes the behaviours which we believe exemplify our values. We will collect examples of how we are fulfilling these values in our programmes, communities work, campaigns and organisational work. This will be an ongoing activity. These will be housed in our knowledge library.

1. Focused – on need and effectiveness (targeted)

To maximise our impact we are focused on literacy need and its relationship with inequality, finding effective approaches for supporting disenfranchised or marginalised communities and individuals.

To live this value we will:

- Work in partnership with communities and individuals to understand the barriers they face, and listen and respond to them at all levels of our charity
- Proactively research what is effective in supporting literacy in specific communities facing exclusion or inequality and for people with protected characteristics
- Support practices and behaviours in partner organisations, from the business, public and charitable sectors, to strengthen their response to diversity and equalities in order to improve community and individual literacy
- Inform all our strategic decisions and planning through our commitment to community consultation, with evidence and insight gained through these relationships

2. Enterprising – content, culture, people and innovation that is inclusive and challenges literacy inequality (how we have impact)

We believe that we need to be enterprising because we can have most impact on literacy linked to inequality through innovative approaches and by constantly strengthening the culture of our charity.

To live this value we will:

- Create new partnerships which will help us meet the needs of communities and individuals facing inequality
- Develop innovative campaigns and projects co-designed with communities
- Value the resourcefulness of our charity's culture, and encourage ideas and perspectives from every member of staff
- Ensure that our partner communities can identify with us, that we talk to them with care and respect, and that they recognise themselves in the profile of our staff and see diversity represented in our resources and communications
- Prioritise diversity in our recruitment and workforce through monitoring and training
- Promote and celebrate an inclusive culture where all feel welcome and valued

3. Connecting – bringing people, communities and organisations together and linking them with assets to transform literacy (strengthening and distributing social and resource capital)

The primary function of reading, writing, speaking and listening is to connect people. Our effectiveness is dependent on our ability to connect with partners and with communities themselves.

To live this value we will:

- Create opportunities for disenfranchised individuals, social groups and communities to tell their stories
- Enable opportunities for communities to identify and deliver their own literacy initiatives
- Celebrate identities and foster connections between people who have things in common and people who don't
- Develop leadership and sustainable capacity within the communities we are committed to supporting
- Work with professionals and volunteers to empower communities
- Connect disadvantaged communities and individuals with literacy resources that can transform their confidence, attitudes and skills
- Ensure that our staff are skilled and have the resources and confidence to connect with a diverse range of communities
- Take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent barriers which may prevent individuals participating in our programmes or working with us