

The Fatherhood Project

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) & Accessibility Policy

Document Version: 2.0

Approved by: Board of Directors

Effective Date: May 2026

Date of Next Review: May 2027



1. Policy Statement

The Fatherhood Project is fully committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all of our youth delivery, mentorship schemes, and recruitment across London and Bedfordshire (Luton).

We recognise that young people who grow up without a stable father figure come from diverse backgrounds and face intersecting challenges. We believe every young person, regardless of their race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, neurodiversity, or disability, has the right to safe, high-quality, and transformative mentorship.

This policy reflects our commitment to embedding EDI at the heart of our organisational strategy, consistent with best practice across the UK charity sector and the Charity Governance Code (Principle 6).

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, mentors, contractors, and partner organisations working with or on behalf of The Fatherhood Project. It covers:

- Service delivery and programme design
- Recruitment, retention, and progression
- Governance and decision-making
- Partnerships and commissioning relationships
- Communications and public engagement

3. Legal Framework

This policy complies fully with the Equality Act 2010 and aligns with the public sector equality duties expected by Violence Reduction Units (VRU) and local authorities. We actively protect against discrimination based on all protected characteristics:

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

We also recognise socio-economic background and care-experience as additional dimensions of disadvantage relevant to our work.

4. Making Our Delivery Accessible to All Young People

To ensure no young person is excluded from our early-intervention and crime-prevention programmes, The Fatherhood Project implements the following accessibility frameworks:

A. Socio-Economic Accessibility (Removing Financial Barriers)

- **Free at Point of Delivery:** All mentoring sessions, workshops, and diversionary activities are 100% free for young people and their families.
- **Travel and Subsistence Support:** We ensure lack of money for transport never stops a young person from attending. Where necessary, we provide pre-paid travel cards or arrange safe transport.
- **Nutrition:** Recognising food poverty as a major issue, we provide free, healthy food and refreshments during our high-risk afternoon and evening delivery sessions (3 PM - 10 PM).

B. Neurodiversity & Mental Health Inclusion

- **Tailored Mentoring Plans:** We recognise that many young people at risk of school exclusion or criminal exploitation are neurodivergent (e.g., ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia). Our managers work with schools and parents to adapt mentoring styles to suit each young person's learning and communication needs.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach:** Our staff and volunteers are trained to understand that 'challenging behaviour' is often a manifestation of trauma or unmet needs. We do not automatically exclude young people for behavioural outbursts; instead, we adapt our approach to support them.
- **Mental Health First Aid:** All frontline staff hold current Mental Health First Aid certification and can signpost young people to appropriate clinical services when needed.

C. Cultural & Religious Inclusivity

- **Diverse & Representative Mentor Roster:** We actively use our grassroots outreach recruitment method to ensure our mentors reflect the diverse, multi-ethnic communities of London and Luton. Young men see positive role models who share their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** We respect religious holidays, fasting periods (e.g., Ramadan), and cultural commitments, ensuring our delivery schedules adapt to the needs of the local community.
- **Anti-Racism Commitment:** We actively challenge structural racism and ensure our programmes are designed to address racial disparities in school exclusions, criminal justice outcomes, and access to services.

D. Physical Accessibility & Safe Spaces

- Accessible Venues: We only host group workshops and meetings in community spaces, schools, or youth centres that are fully wheelchair accessible and compliant with UK building regulations.
- Neutral Territory: In London and Luton, gang boundaries can prevent young people from crossing into certain postcodes. Our managers conduct localised risk assessments to ensure delivery venues are located in neutral, safe spaces that all local youth can access without fear.
- Digital Accessibility: All digital communications, resources, and online mentoring platforms meet WCAG 2.2 AA standards to ensure accessibility for young people with visual, auditory, or cognitive impairments.

5. Inclusive Recruitment (Staff and Volunteers)

As a grassroots non-profit, we value lived experience alongside professional qualifications. Our recruitment processes are designed to be accessible to individuals from underrepresented backgrounds:

- All job advertisements are written in plain, accessible language and distributed through community networks as well as traditional channels.
- We use structured, competency-based interviews to reduce unconscious bias.
- We offer flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process.
- We actively seek to build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve, with particular focus on recruiting from Black, Asian, and minoritised ethnic communities.
- We are committed to pay transparency and equitable progression pathways for all staff.

6. Inclusive Leadership & Governance

We recognise that inclusive leadership is essential to sustaining meaningful change. Our Board of Directors and senior leadership team are committed to:

- Ensuring diverse representation at all levels of governance and decision-making.
- Undertaking annual EDI training, including unconscious bias and anti-racism education.
- Championing a culture of belonging where staff, volunteers, and young people feel safe to be their authentic selves.
- Embedding EDI considerations into all strategic decisions, budget allocations, and partnership agreements.

7. Training and Capability Building

We invest in continuous EDI learning for all staff, volunteers, and trustees:

- Mandatory EDI induction training for all new staff and volunteers within their first month.
- Annual refresher training covering unconscious bias, anti-racism, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practice.
- Specialist training for managers on inclusive leadership, neurodiversity awareness, and supporting young people with complex needs.
- Access to external CPD opportunities and sector-wide EDI networks (e.g., NCVO, Charity Governance Code resources).

8. Monitoring, Data & Accountability

We are committed to transparent, data-driven EDI practice:

- Demographic Data Collection: We anonymously track the demographic profile of young people entering our programmes to ensure we are reaching the most marginalised groups in London and Luton.
- Annual EDI Report: We publish an annual EDI performance report to our Board, funders, and commissioning partners, benchmarking progress against the National Equality Standard (NES).
- Young People's Voice: We conduct regular feedback surveys and focus groups with programme participants to understand their experience of inclusion and belonging.
- Staff and Volunteer Surveys: Annual inclusion surveys measure staff experience, with results informing action plans.
- Continuous Improvement: EDI objectives are reviewed quarterly by the senior leadership team and annually by the Board of Directors.

9. Complaints and Breaches

The Fatherhood Project operates a zero-tolerance policy toward discrimination, bullying, or harassment of any kind.

- Any young person, parent, staff member, or volunteer who experiences or witnesses discrimination can report it confidentially to the CEO or a designated Board Safeguarding Lead.
- All complaints are investigated promptly and fairly, with outcomes communicated to the complainant.
- Any breach of this policy by staff, volunteers, or managers will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or removal from the organisation.

10. Intersectional Practice

We recognise that young people experience overlapping and compounding forms of disadvantage. A young Black boy with ADHD living in poverty faces qualitatively different barriers than any single characteristic alone would suggest. Our approach:

- Assesses each young person's needs holistically, considering how multiple identities and circumstances interact.
- Designs programmes that address root causes of exclusion rather than treating symptoms in isolation.
- Partners with specialist organisations to provide wraparound support where our expertise alone is insufficient.

11. Community Engagement & Co-Design

We believe the communities we serve must shape the services they receive:

- Young people are consulted on programme design through regular feedback sessions and youth advisory panels.
- Parents and carers are engaged as partners in their young person's mentoring journey.
- Local community leaders and faith organisations are invited to contribute to our strategic direction.
- We publish accessible impact reports so communities can hold us accountable.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislative changes, organisational developments, or feedback from stakeholders require it. The next scheduled review is May 2027.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Directors:

[Name], Chief Executive Officer

Date: [Insert Date]

