

November 2025

PP 06 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set out how GMDT aims to ensure that no individual receives less favourable treatment on grounds of race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, gender reassignment, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, or age, (protected characteristics) and that there are no conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justified.

1. About this policy

Greater Morpeth Development Trust (The Trust) is committed to working towards equal opportunities to ensure that we deliver services and provide employment fairly to all sections of the community. We will endeavour to treat all people equally and fairly whether they are:

- Seeking employment or are already employed by the Trust
- Users of, or potential users of Trust Services
- Contracting to supply goods and services to the Trust
- Seeking assistance from the Trust
- Volunteering with the Trust

2. Legal Obligations

In applying the policy, the Trust will take account of relevant legislation and associated codes of practices such as the latest

- Equality Act
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Race Relations Act
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Human Rights Act

3. Our aims in employment

The Trust aims for fair and equal opportunity in all areas of employment and takes positive action to eliminate unfair discrimination within a safe, secure working environment that values the identities and cultures of our employees.

(i) Recruitment and Selection

Wherever possible, vacancies will be notified to Job Centre Plus and advertised locally.

Individuals involved in recruitment and selection of staff are required to adhere to the following guidelines and to the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

- i. A job description and person specification outlining desirable and essential qualities, skills, knowledge and personal qualities must be drawn up for every vacancy and provided to all prospective employees
- ii. Information about job vacancies is to be made available to all sections of the community
- iii. All job applicants should be given details of the selection process in advance.
- iv. Selection criteria (job description and person specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the performance of the job.
- v. All shortlisting criteria must be based on the person specification
- vi. All selection decisions must be made based on merit
- vii. All those involved in recruitment and selection should receive training in fair recruitment and selection procedures.
- viii. Wherever possible, more than one person must be involved in the selection interview and recruitment process, and all should have received training in equal opportunities.
- ix. Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies must be recorded.
- x. Applicants with disabilities, who meet the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.
- xi. Under-represented groups will also be encouraged to apply for employment opportunities with the Trust. However, actual recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit.

(ii) Training and Development

- The Trust is committed to the personal development of its employees. Employees will be supported to undertake the training and development they need to help them to achieve and maintain a high standard of performance and be encouraged to achieve their full potential.
- We recognise that all staff, and in particular, those who provide services to customers and those involved in recruitment will require training on equality and diversity which will be made available.
- Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups.

(iii) Harassment and Bullying

- The Trust is committed to creating a workplace where every employee is treated with dignity and respect. Harassment or bullying within the workplace is unacceptable and any employee who feels that they are a victim of harassment or bullying can complain without fear of being victimised or isolated.
- Under the Disciplinary Procedure, unfair discrimination, harassment and bullying of employees, volunteers, clients or members of the public will be treated very seriously and investigated thoroughly and promptly.

(iv) Personnel Records

- In order to ensure the effective operation of the Equal Opportunity Policy (and for no other purpose) a record will be kept of all employees' and job applicants' gender, racial origins and disability.
- Access to this information will be restricted.

5. Responsibility for the policy

- All employees, trustees and volunteers are responsible for complying with the Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring that the standards of behaviour expected are achieved
- Specific responsibilities fall upon those individuals involved in recruitment and personnel administration or who receive requests for service provision.

- The Board is responsible for implementing the policy and for ensuring that members of staff and trustees are familiar with, and act in accordance with the policy.
- The Board will have overall responsibility for the policy and for ensuring consistency across the Trust in employment practices and in monitoring the implementation of practices and procedures.
- The Chairman of the Board will monitor the overall operation of the policy

6. Communication

- The Board is responsible for ensuring that all employees are made aware of this policy and that it is brought to the attention of new recruits as part of the induction process.
- This policy will also be made available to members of the community on request.

7. Complaints Procedure

The Trust will make its complaints procedure fully accessible. Complaints will be monitored by protected characteristics to support monitoring of equal opportunities.

8. Agreed by Board on 8th December 2025

9. Next Review (biannual review) Reviewed November 2027