



## **Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy<sup>1</sup>** **(Statement Of Intent)**

Lead Trustee – Pratima Dattani

*Last reviewed in September 2024*

*Next review due September 2027*

Advantage Africa recognises that everyone has a contribution to make to society and a right to equal treatment. The organisation is committed to equal opportunities, non-discriminatory procedures and practices.

Advantage Africa will work in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duty (2011). We will ensure that we consider the needs of people we support and employees when shaping policy and delivering services so that our activities are equally accessible to all.

We aim to ensure that in our services and employment no beneficiary, staff member or applicant, volunteer, or organisation/individual with whom we interact and work receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:<sup>2</sup>

- Age
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnerships

In addition, Advantage Africa will not discriminate unfairly on the basis of unrelated criminal convictions or cautions. However as part of our safeguarding procedures, an application for a criminal record check of a new employee, volunteer or trustees will always be submitted to DBS. Potential employees and volunteers will be confirmed in post or otherwise subject to these checks and in discussion with the individual concerned.

Advantage Africa's staff, trustees and volunteers are obliged to respect and act in accordance with this policy. Bullying or harassment are completely unacceptable and where anyone breaches the policy in the course of their work, they will be liable to action in line with Advantage Africa's Disciplinary Procedure and Safeguarding Policy. Where an employee, volunteer or representative feels they have been unfairly treated within the workplace on grounds covered by the equal opportunities policy they have the right to complain or take out a formal grievance in line with Advantage Africa's Grievance Procedure.

All Advantage Africa jobs will be open to internal candidates where this complies with legal frameworks.

Andrew Betts, Chief Executive, has overall responsibility for implementation of Advantage Africa's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, under the guidance of the Board of Trustees and its lead person for Human Resource related issues. The Chief Executive ensures this policy is a living, relevant document through a programme of action for implementation and review. This includes periodic review of advertising, recruitment and application materials and processes. It also involves implementation, monitoring and communication of the policy during recruitment, new staff and volunteer training activities, staff team and Trustee meetings.<sup>3</sup>

Our commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity is at the core of our work with marginalised people in Africa which aims to:

- Address the conditions and beliefs that lead to discrimination and stigmatising of certain groups of people living in the communities with which we work.
- Create new opportunities for people disadvantaged by discrimination and other social conditions that limit the choices open to them.
- Promote and support positive role models, images and stories of marginalised people overcoming hardship as a means of redressing prejudice and discrimination.

The Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy was first adopted on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and is due for comprehensive review every three years.

---

<sup>1</sup>A Diversity Policy is more wide-reaching than equal opportunities. It incorporates the principle that all should receive equal rights but also that, rather than ignoring the differences that exist between people, diversity should instead be recognised and respected. By doing so, it creates an environment where everyone feels valued for their individual talents and where their skills and competencies are fully utilised. National Council of Voluntary Organisations 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Under the Equality Act 2010, people have legal protection against discrimination in the form of this list of 'protected characteristics.'

<sup>3</sup>It is essential that a written equality policy is backed by a clear programme of action for implementation and continual review. It is a process which consists of four key stages: planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the equality policy. Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Code of Practice 2010.