



Severn Mentoring Equality & Diversity Policy

(Community Mentoring & Alternative Provision – September 2025)

1. Purpose of the Policy

Severn Mentoring is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone—learners, staff, volunteers, and partners—is treated with dignity and respect.

This policy outlines our approach to ensuring that no individual is unfairly discriminated against and that equality of opportunity is embedded in all areas of our practice.

It applies to all aspects of our operations, including recruitment, mentoring, tuition, training, and community engagement.

2. Aims and Ethos

At Severn Mentoring, we believe that diversity enriches our organisation and strengthens our ability to connect with the communities we serve.

Our ethos is built on fairness, respect, empathy, and opportunity — ensuring that every person feels seen, heard and valued.

We aim to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity for all individuals.
- Promote positive relationships and mutual respect across different backgrounds, identities and experiences.
- Ensure all policies, procedures and practices are fair, transparent and inclusive.
- Empower learners and staff to challenge inequality wherever it occurs.
- Create a culture that celebrates difference and values individuality.

“Where Opportunity Meets Potential” means opportunity for everyone — without exception.

3. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**

- **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)** – to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations.
- **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**

Although Severn Mentoring is an independent organisation, we operate in partnership with public bodies (local authorities, schools and colleges) and therefore uphold the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

4. Protected Characteristics

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, no person will be treated less favourably on the grounds of any of the following **protected characteristics**:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
7. Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
8. Sex (gender)
9. Sexual orientation

Severn Mentoring also recognises that disadvantage and discrimination may arise through socio-economic background, care experience, or other vulnerabilities not specifically listed in law, and we will treat these with equal sensitivity and care.

5. Company Commitments

Severn Mentoring will:

Recruitment & Employment

- Operate fair and transparent recruitment processes based solely on merit and suitability for the role.
- Ensure job descriptions and adverts reflect inclusive language and equal opportunity statements.
- Provide reasonable adjustments for candidates and employees with disabilities.
- Offer equal access to training, supervision and promotion opportunities.

Service Delivery

- Ensure all learners have equal access to mentoring, tuition and support services.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable participation by those with disabilities or additional needs.
- Actively promote respect, tolerance and inclusion in all learning and community settings.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour, language or attitudes from staff, learners or partners.

Workplace Culture

- Foster an environment where every person feels valued and safe to express themselves.
- Provide training on equality, diversity and unconscious bias to all staff.
- Monitor the diversity of our workforce and service users to inform future planning.
- Encourage feedback and representation from all backgrounds.

Accountability

- Directors hold overall responsibility for compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead oversees the integration of equality within safeguarding and behaviour policies.
- Line managers are responsible for addressing discrimination or unfair treatment immediately.

6. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Discrimination, Harassment or Bullying

Any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying—whether direct, indirect, verbal, physical, or online—is unacceptable and will be treated as a **serious disciplinary offence**.

For staff or volunteers:

- Allegations will be investigated promptly under Severn Mentoring's Disciplinary Procedure.
- Proven acts of discrimination or harassment may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Where the incident has safeguarding implications, the DSL and, if necessary, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed.

For learners or service users:

- Incidents will be investigated under the **Behaviour and Code of Conduct Policy**.
- Responses will be restorative and educational wherever possible, ensuring understanding and accountability.
- Persistent or serious cases may lead to exclusion from the service or referral to external agencies.

Grievance and Complaints

- Any employee or service user who believes they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against may raise the issue through Severn Mentoring's **Grievance or Complaints Procedure**.
- Concerns will be handled confidentially, investigated fairly, and responded to promptly.
- No person will suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern.

7. Monitoring and Review

- Equality objectives and compliance data are reviewed **annually**.
- Policy impact is monitored through recruitment statistics, learner access data, and incident reports.
- Updates are made in line with legislative change or emerging local needs.

- Findings are shared with commissioners and stakeholders as part of our commitment to transparency and improvement.
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Approved by: Directors / DSL

Date: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Applies to: All Severn Mentoring staff, learners, volunteers and contractors