



PINK SKILLS

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Everyone belongs here. No exception

This policy sets out what we are committed to and what that means in practice. It is written for everyone who works with or for Pink Skills, whether you are a full-time member of staff, a mentor, a coach, a trainee or a volunteer.

Our commitment in one sentence

Every single person who comes into contact with Pink Skills will be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. We will not treat people differently because of who they are. And we will actively work to make sure everyone feels welcome, included and able to participate fully.

What the Law Says

The Equality Act 2010 is the main piece of law that covers equality. It protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in a range of settings including education, employment and the provision of services.

The Act identifies nine protected characteristics. These are the aspects of a person's identity that the law specifically protects. You cannot treat someone less favourably, harass them or victimise them because of any of these:

Characteristic	What this means in everyday terms	Why it matters for us
Age	Your age, whether you are young, old or anywhere in between	We work with students of different ages. We do not assume younger means less capable or older means more capable.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on daily life	Some of our participants have disabilities, including invisible ones like mental health conditions, autism or chronic illness. We make adjustments.
Gender reassignment	Being transgender or non-binary, or going through the process of changing your gender	We use the name and pronouns a person tells us to use. No debate, no exceptions.
Marriage and civil partnership	Being married or in a civil partnership	This applies mainly to employment. We do not treat people differently because of their relationship status.
Pregnancy and maternity	Being pregnant or having recently given birth	We make adjustments for participants or staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave.
Race	Your colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin	We actively work to make the programme welcoming and relevant to people of all backgrounds.
Religion or belief	Any religion or philosophical belief, or no religion at all	We respect people's faith and beliefs and do not ask people to compromise them.
Sex	Whether you are a man or a woman	We will not make assumptions about someone's role, capability or needs based on their sex.
Sexual orientation	Whether you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual	We are an inclusive organisation. Everyone is welcome here.

The Human Rights Act 1998 also matters here. It gives everyone in the UK the right to a private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. These rights underpin everything we do.

Types of Discrimination

Discrimination does not always look the way you might expect. Here are the main types the law recognises:

Direct discrimination

Treating someone worse than you would treat someone else because of a protected characteristic. For example, not accepting someone onto the MENTOR programme because of their race. This is straightforwardly wrong and is against the law.

Indirect discrimination

When a rule or practice applies to everyone but puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage. For example, if we only ran sessions at times that meant people with certain religious observances could never attend, that could be indirect discrimination, even if we did not intend it. Intention does not matter. Impact does.

Harassment

Behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive. This includes unwanted comments about someone's race, sexual jokes, misgendering someone repeatedly, or making someone feel like they do not belong.

Victimisation

Treating someone badly because they have raised a concern or complaint about discrimination. If someone tells us they have been treated unfairly and then they get treated worse because of that, that is victimisation. We will not tolerate it.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments

If someone has a disability and we fail to make reasonable changes to ensure they can participate on an equal basis, that is a form of discrimination. Reasonable adjustments might include providing materials in a different format, offering flexible session times, or ensuring physical access.

Our Commitments

Here is what this actually means for how we operate. These are not aspirations. They are promises.

In our programme design

- We actively design our projects to be accessible and relevant to people of all backgrounds, identities and abilities
- We consider equality and inclusion at every stage, from how we recruit participants to how we assess and record outcomes
- We seek feedback from participants about their experience and use it to improve
- We review our programme materials regularly to make sure they do not reflect unconscious bias or exclude anyone

In our sessions

- We create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in every session
- We challenge discriminatory comments or behaviour if they arise, without exception
- We use language that is inclusive, respectful and appropriate to the person we are speaking with
- We ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for every participant
- We never assume someone's background, identity or needs based on how they look or where they are from

In our communications

- We write in plain, accessible English
- We provide materials in alternative formats on request, for example larger print, digital formats compatible with screen readers, or translated materials where possible
- We make sure all participants know how to access support and raise concerns

In our staff and mentor recruitment

- We recruit on the basis of skills, values and capability, not background or identity
- We advertise roles widely to reach a diverse pool of candidates
- We train everyone who works with us on equality, diversity and inclusion before they start
- We support staff and mentors to raise concerns without fear of retaliation

Intersectionality

Here is something important. Most people do not experience the world through just one part of their identity. A Black disabled woman, a young gay man from a low-income background, a Muslim student navigating mental health challenges at university, these people face experiences that are shaped by multiple aspects of who they are, and those experiences can compound and interact in ways that a simple list of protected characteristics does not fully capture.

We take an intersectional approach. That means we try to understand the whole person, not just one dimension of their identity. It means we do not assume that addressing race automatically addresses the experience of a Black woman who also experiences sexism. It means we are curious, we listen, and we do not make assumptions.

We consider this important in all our projects. For example where we are working with people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET, people from certain backgrounds face compounding disadvantages. Being from a low-income household, being a first-generation university student, having a mental health condition, and being from an ethnic minority community are not four separate issues. For many students, they are one lived experience, and we design our support with that in mind.

Positive Action

Sometimes doing the right thing means doing more than just treating everyone the same. The Equality Act 2010 allows for what is called positive action, which means taking steps to support or encourage people from groups that are underrepresented or disadvantaged, as long as it is proportionate and evidence based.

Pink Skills may use positive action to:

- Actively encourage applications to the from people who are underrepresented in including people from ethnic minority backgrounds, lower socioeconomic backgrounds and disabled.
- Ensure our projects reach people who are at the highest risk of disengaging and who may come from groups that have historically been underserved by support structures
- Seek mentors and facilitators who reflect the diversity of the communities we work with.

Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination, which is unlawful. We will never appoint someone to a role or place on a programme because of their protected characteristic alone. But we will take active steps to make sure the path to participation is equally open to everyone.

Responding to Discrimination

If you experience or witness discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind while involved with Pink Skills, we want to know about it. Not next week. Now.

Here is what to do:

1. If it is safe and appropriate to do so, you can address the behaviour directly in the moment. For example: "I do not think that comment was okay and I would ask you not to use that language." You should never feel obliged to do this if it does not feel safe.
2. Report it to a Pink Skills member of staff or facilitator as soon as possible.
3. If your concern is about a member of Pink Skills staff, you can raise it with senior leadership directly at info@pinkskills.org.
4. If you would prefer to make a formal complaint, please follow the Complaints Policy. Your complaint will be taken seriously, investigated fairly and dealt with in confidence.
5. You will not be penalised for raising a concern. Retaliation against anyone who reports a discrimination concern is itself a breach of this policy and will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

If discrimination is linked to a safeguarding concern, for example if discriminatory abuse is putting someone at risk of harm, it will also be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Accessibility

We are committed to making our projects as accessible as possible to everyone who needs them. Accessibility is not an afterthought. It is built into how we plan and deliver.

- If you have a disability, a health condition or any other access need, please tell us. We will work with you to put the right adjustments in place.

- If English is not your first language, please let us know. We will do what we can to support you.
- If you have caring responsibilities that affect when you can attend sessions, please talk to us. We will try to find a solution.
- If the venue or platform we are using is not accessible to you, tell us and we will look at alternatives.

We cannot make adjustments we do not know are needed. Please do not suffer in silence. Talk to us.

Data, Monitoring and Accountability

We cannot improve what we do not measure. Pink Skills will collect equality data from programme participants and staff to help us understand who is accessing our programmes, whether there are any gaps, and whether our outcomes are fair and equal across different groups.

This data will be:

- Collected anonymously wherever possible
- Stored securely in line with the Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR
- Reviewed at least once a year by senior leadership
- Used to identify and address any disparities in participation or outcomes
- Included in our annual impact reporting

If the data shows us that a particular group is underrepresented or experiencing worse outcomes, we will take action. We will not just note it and move on.

Where This Policy Connects to Others

Equality does not sit in isolation. It runs through everything we do and connects with several other Pink Skills policies.

- **Safeguarding Policy:** Discriminatory abuse, such as abuse linked to someone's race, disability, sexuality or gender identity, is a form of safeguarding harm. Our

Safeguarding Policy and this Equality Policy work together to ensure no one is harmed because of who they are.

- **Data Protection Policy:** Equality monitoring data includes sensitive personal information such as health conditions, ethnicity and sexual orientation. This is classified as special category data under UK GDPR and is handled with the highest level of care and security.
- **Code of Conduct:** Everyone who works with Pink Skills is expected to uphold the values of this policy in how they behave. Discriminatory behaviour, language or attitudes are a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- **Complaints Policy:** If you believe you have been discriminated against, you can use the Complaints Policy to raise this formally. Your complaint will be investigated independently and treated with confidentiality.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** If you believe Pink Skills as an organisation is failing in its equality duties, you can raise this without fear of retaliation using the Whistleblowing Policy.

Reviewing and Updating This Policy

This policy is reviewed every year by senior leadership. It is also updated sooner if there are changes in legislation, significant changes to the programme, or if an incident or feedback tells us we need to do something differently.

We welcome suggestions for how to make this policy stronger, more relevant or more accessible. If you have an idea, please email info@pinkskills.co.uk.

This policy is version 1.0, effective from April 2026.

Next review: April 2027.

Questions or suggestions? info@pinkskills.org