



Organisation: Unmask Your Potential Ltd
Policy owner: Helen Kent
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Helen Kent
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: N/A
Online Safety Lead: Helen Kent
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7. Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

7.1 Purpose

Unmask Your Potential Ltd is committed to providing services that are inclusive, respectful, non-discriminatory and accessible. We believe every child, young person, adult, family member, commissioner, staff member, volunteer and partner should be treated with dignity, fairness and respect at all times.

This policy explains how Unmask Your Potential Ltd will deliver its services in a professional, culturally sensitive and religiously sensitive way, supported by well-trained staff, associates, contractors and volunteers.

7.2 Scope

This policy applies to all directors, employees, associates, contractors, sessional workers, volunteers and anyone acting on behalf of Unmask Your Potential Ltd. It applies to all areas of service delivery, including:

- 1:1 coaching, mentoring and strengths-based support
- Group programmes and workshops
- Alternative provision
- Clarity4D Youth Profile work
- Healthy relationships programmes
- Online and remote sessions
- Communication with young people, parents, carers, schools, commissioners and professionals
- Recruitment, training and supervision of staff and volunteers

7.3 Legal framework

This policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010 and the organisation's safeguarding, safer recruitment, professional boundaries, complaints, data protection and health and safety procedures.

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will not unlawfully discriminate against anyone because of protected characteristics, including:

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

We also recognise that children, young people and families may experience barriers linked to socio-economic background, care experience, neurodiversity, mental health, language, education history, family circumstances, offending history, trauma, attendance barriers or other life experiences. These factors will be approached with sensitivity and without judgement.

7.4 Our commitment

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will:

- Treat all service users with dignity and respect at all times
- Provide services in a non-discriminatory, inclusive and professional manner
- Respect cultural, religious and personal identity
- Avoid assumptions, stereotypes and judgemental language
- Make reasonable adjustments where possible to support access and participation
- Promote equality of opportunity and positive engagement
- Challenge discriminatory, bullying, abusive or disrespectful behaviour
- Listen to the views and needs of children, young people and families
- Provide staff and volunteers with appropriate training, guidance and supervision
- Ensure safeguarding responses are inclusive and sensitive to individual circumstances
- Review practice where concerns, complaints or barriers are identified

7.5 Dignity and respect

All service users must be treated with dignity, respect, kindness and fairness. Staff and volunteers must use language and behaviour that is appropriate, respectful and supportive.

Staff must not:

- Use discriminatory, offensive, humiliating or degrading language

- Make assumptions about a person's identity, culture, religion, family background, ability or needs
- Treat a young person less favourably because of behaviour, attendance, diagnosis, background, care experience or previous involvement with services
- Ignore bullying, harassment, prejudice or discriminatory behaviour
- Shame, blame or label young people because of their difficulties

Our approach is strengths-based and relational. We seek to recognise what is strong in each young person while also supporting areas for development in a respectful and constructive way.

7.6 Culturally and religiously sensitive practice

Unmask Your Potential Ltd recognises that culture, religion, belief, family traditions and identity can be important parts of a young person's life. Staff and volunteers will seek to understand and respect these factors while maintaining safeguarding responsibilities.

This means we will:

- Ask respectful questions where further understanding is needed
- Avoid assumptions about cultural or religious practices
- Consider religious observance, clothing, diet, prayer, festivals and family expectations where relevant to provision
- Use interpreters or translated information where reasonably required and available
- Recognise that families may have different experiences of education, authority and support services
- Work respectfully with parents, carers and community contexts where appropriate
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are never ignored or minimised because of cultural or religious factors

Cultural and religious sensitivity does not override safeguarding responsibilities. Where there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

7.7 Supporting neurodiversity, SEND and additional needs

Unmask Your Potential Ltd aims to make provision accessible and responsive to individual needs. For young people who are neurodiverse, have SEND, communication needs, anxiety, trauma-related needs or emotional wellbeing needs, staff will consider reasonable adjustments such as:

- Clear structure and expectations
- Flexible pacing and breaks
- Visual or practical activities
- Reduced sensory demands where possible

- Alternative ways to communicate
- Additional processing time
- Strengths-based language
- Predictable session routines
- Collaboration with commissioners, parents, carers or professionals where appropriate

The organisation recognises that some young people may communicate distress or unmet need through behaviour. Staff will respond with curiosity, consistency and professionalism, while maintaining safe boundaries.

7.8 Staff and volunteer training

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will ensure that staff, associates, contractors and volunteers receive appropriate induction, training and guidance to deliver services in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive and professional manner.

Training and guidance may include:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Professional boundaries
- Trauma-informed and relational practice
- Neurodiversity and SEND awareness
- Anti-bullying and anti-discriminatory practice
- Cultural and religious sensitivity
- Communication and respectful language
- Managing challenging behaviour safely and respectfully

Staff will be expected to reflect on their own practice and seek support where they are unsure how best to meet a young person's needs.

7.9 Recruitment and employment

Unmask Your Potential Ltd aims to apply fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recruitment practices. Recruitment decisions will be based on skills, experience, suitability, safer recruitment checks and ability to fulfil the role.

All staff and volunteers are expected to support the organisation's commitment to equality, inclusion, safeguarding, dignity and respect.

7.10 Challenging discrimination, bullying and harassment

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying, hate language or abusive behaviour from staff, volunteers, young people, parents, carers, visitors or partner organisations.

Where discriminatory behaviour occurs, staff will respond proportionately and professionally. This may include:

- Challenging language or behaviour safely
- Supporting the person affected
- Recording the incident
- Informing the DSL where there is a safeguarding concern
- Informing the commissioner where appropriate
- Reviewing risk assessments or support plans
- Taking disciplinary or contractual action where the concern relates to staff or representatives

7.11 Complaints and concerns

Service users, parents, carers, staff, volunteers, commissioners and partner agencies may raise concerns if they believe they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, disrespectful practice or failure to make reasonable adjustments.

Concerns will be taken seriously, recorded and responded to in line with the organisation's complaints, safeguarding or staff procedures as appropriate.

7.12 Monitoring

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will monitor equality and inclusion through feedback, supervision, incident records, complaints, safeguarding reviews and programme reflection. The organisation will review practice where barriers or concerns are identified.

7.13 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Statutory guidance changes
- Suffolk safeguarding procedures change
- There is a safeguarding incident or serious concern
- Provision changes significantly
- Commissioning requirements change

Approved by: Helen Kent

Role: Director

Signature: 

Date: 01/09/2025