

Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy

Youth Start Limited

Company Number: 16864238

Registered Office: 370 Osmaston Park Road, Derby, DE24 8FB

Website: youthstart.co.uk

Effective Date

1 January 2026

Last Updated

1 January 2026

Introduction

This Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy sets out Youth Start Limited's commitment to providing mentorship that is inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all young people, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. Youth Start recognises that diversity strengthens mentorship relationships and that inclusive mentorship practices lead to better outcomes for candidates.


This policy applies to all mentorship activities delivered by Youth Start, including mentorship provided by staff members, volunteers, and external mentors. It outlines Youth Start's approach to ensuring that mentorship is accessible to young people from all backgrounds and that mentors are trained and supported to deliver inclusive mentorship.

Youth Start is committed to creating a mentorship environment in which all young people feel valued, respected, and supported to achieve their potential, regardless of their protected characteristics or personal circumstances.

Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy is to:

- Ensure that mentorship is accessible to young people from all backgrounds and circumstances
- Promote inclusive mentorship practices that value and respect diversity
- Ensure that mentors are trained and supported to deliver culturally competent mentorship
- Prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities in mentorship

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- Support young people from underrepresented groups to access mentorship and employment
 - Create a mentorship environment in which all young people feel safe, valued, and supported
 - Comply with UK equality legislation
 - Promote positive outcomes for all candidates
 - Reflect Youth Start's commitment to social enterprise values and inclusive practice
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Scope and Application

This policy applies to:

- All mentorship activities delivered by Youth Start
- All mentors employed or engaged by Youth Start, including staff members, volunteers, and external mentors
- All candidates participating in Youth Start's mentorship programme
- All aspects of mentorship delivery, including recruitment, matching, training, delivery, and evaluation

This policy covers mentorship in relation to:

- Employment and career development
 - Personal development and confidence building
 - Skills development and training
 - Workplace support and integration
 - Ongoing support and progression
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Legal Framework

Youth Start operates in compliance with the following UK legislation:

- **Equality Act 2010:** Prohibits discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)
 - **Human Rights Act 1998:** Protects fundamental human rights including the right to respect for private and family life
 - **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR:** Protects personal data and requires fair and transparent processing
 - **Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003:** Requires fair treatment of candidates
 - **Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):** Requires public bodies to have due regard to equality
 - **ACAS guidance:** Provides best practice guidance on equality and diversity
 - **Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance:** Provides guidance on equality and diversity in practice
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Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, the following are protected characteristics:

- **Age:** Discrimination based on age
- **Disability:** Discrimination based on disability or perceived disability
- **Gender Reassignment:** Discrimination based on gender reassignment or transition
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Discrimination based on marital or civil partnership status
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Discrimination based on pregnancy or maternity
- **Race:** Discrimination based on race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origins
- **Religion or Belief:** Discrimination based on religion, belief, or lack of belief
- **Sex:** Discrimination based on sex or gender
- **Sexual Orientation:** Discrimination based on sexual orientation

Youth Start is committed to ensuring that mentorship is not affected by discrimination on any of these grounds.

Youth Start's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Youth Start is committed to:

- Welcoming young people from all backgrounds and circumstances
 - Providing mentorship that is culturally sensitive and respectful of diversity
 - Ensuring that mentorship is accessible to young people with disabilities and additional support needs
 - Supporting young people from underrepresented groups in the workforce
 - Creating a mentorship environment in which all young people feel safe, valued, and supported
 - Training mentors to deliver inclusive and culturally competent mentorship
 - Monitoring diversity in mentorship participation and outcomes
 - Continuously improving mentorship practices to promote inclusion
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Accessibility of Mentorship

Physical Accessibility

Youth Start is committed to ensuring that mentorship activities and locations are physically accessible to all young people, including those with mobility impairments or disabilities.

Accessibility Measures:

- Mentorship activities will be held in accessible locations with appropriate facilities
- Alternative arrangements will be made for young people who cannot access standard locations

- Remote mentorship options will be available where appropriate
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate young people's needs
- Information about accessibility will be provided in advance

Communication Accessibility

Youth Start is committed to ensuring that mentorship is accessible to young people with communication needs, including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech or language impairments.

Communication Support:

- Information will be provided in accessible formats (large print, Braille, easy read, audio)
- Sign language interpreters or communication support workers will be provided where needed
- Mentorship materials will use clear, simple language
- Additional time will be provided for communication where needed
- Alternative communication methods will be supported

Neurodiversity

Youth Start recognises and values neurodiversity, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other neurological differences.

Neurodiversity Support:

- Mentors will be trained to understand and support neurodivergent young people
- Mentorship will be adapted to suit different learning and communication styles
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to support neurodivergent candidates
- Mentors will be trained to recognise and challenge neurophobic attitudes

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Youth Start recognises that young people may have mental health needs or be managing mental health conditions.

Mental Health Support:

- Mentors will be trained to recognise signs of mental health difficulties
 - Mentorship will be supportive and non-judgmental
 - Mentors will signpost young people to appropriate mental health support services
 - Mentorship will not replace professional mental health treatment
 - Confidentiality and privacy will be respected
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Inclusive Mentor Recruitment and Selection

Youth Start is committed to recruiting mentors from diverse backgrounds and ensuring that the mentor workforce reflects the diversity of candidates.

Recruitment

Inclusive Recruitment Practices:

- Recruitment materials and processes will be accessible and welcoming to candidates from all backgrounds
- Recruitment will actively encourage applications from underrepresented groups
- Recruitment will not discriminate on the grounds of protected characteristics
- Recruitment will consider the value of lived experience and diverse perspectives
- Recruitment will be transparent and fair

Selection and Matching

Mentor Selection:

- Mentors will be selected on the basis of their ability to deliver effective mentorship
- Mentors will be assessed on their commitment to inclusive practice and diversity
- Mentors will be assessed on their understanding of equality and diversity
- Mentors will be assessed on their ability to work with young people from diverse backgrounds

Mentor Matching:

- Mentors will be matched with candidates based on a range of factors, including skills, experience, and compatibility
- Where possible, mentors from diverse backgrounds will be matched with candidates from similar backgrounds
- Mentor matching will take account of candidates' preferences and needs
- Mentor matching will aim to provide positive role models and representation

Mentor Training and Development

All mentors must receive training on diversity and inclusion before delivering mentorship.

Mandatory Training

Equality and Diversity Training:

- All mentors will receive training on the Equality Act 2010 and protected characteristics
- Training will cover discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Training will cover unconscious bias and how to challenge it
- Training will cover the impact of discrimination on young people
- Training will be updated annually

Culturally Competent Mentorship:

- All mentors will receive training on culturally competent mentorship
- Training will cover understanding different cultures, beliefs, and values
- Training will cover communicating effectively with people from different backgrounds
- Training will cover recognising and challenging stereotypes and prejudice
- Training will cover adapting mentorship to suit different cultural contexts

Safeguarding and Inclusion:

- All mentors will receive training on safeguarding young people from discrimination and harassment
- Training will cover recognising signs of discrimination and bullying
- Training will cover responding to discrimination and supporting young people
- Training will cover confidentiality and reporting procedures

Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- All mentors will receive training on mental health awareness
- Training will cover recognising signs of mental health difficulties
- Training will cover supporting young people with mental health needs
- Training will cover signposting to appropriate support services

Neurodiversity:

- All mentors will receive training on neurodiversity
- Training will cover understanding autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other neurological differences
- Training will cover adapting mentorship to suit neurodivergent learning styles
- Training will cover challenging neurophobic attitudes

Ongoing Development

- Mentors will have access to ongoing training and development opportunities
- Mentors will be encouraged to undertake further training on diversity and inclusion topics
- Mentors will receive supervision and support to develop inclusive mentorship skills
- Mentors will be encouraged to reflect on their practice and identify areas for development

Inclusive Mentorship Practice

Creating an Inclusive Mentorship Environment

Mentors are responsible for creating a mentorship environment in which all young people feel safe, valued, and supported.

Inclusive Practice:

- Mentors will treat all young people with respect and dignity
- Mentors will listen actively and value young people's perspectives
- Mentors will use inclusive language that does not assume or stereotype
- Mentors will be aware of their own biases and work to challenge them
- Mentors will celebrate and value diversity
- Mentors will create opportunities for young people to share their experiences and perspectives
- Mentors will adapt their mentorship approach to suit individual needs and preferences

Addressing Discrimination and Harassment

Youth Start is committed to preventing discrimination and harassment in mentorship relationships.

Zero Tolerance:

- Youth Start has a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment
- Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated in any form
- Young people will be supported to report discrimination and harassment
- Reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly
- Appropriate action will be taken in response to discrimination and harassment

Reporting:

- Young people will be provided with information about how to report discrimination and harassment
- Multiple reporting channels will be available (verbal, written, confidential, anonymous)
- Young people will be supported through the reporting process
- Confidentiality will be respected
- Young people will not be victimised for making a report

Support:

- Young people who have experienced discrimination or harassment will be supported
- Appropriate counselling or support services will be offered
- Mentorship relationships may be reviewed or changed if appropriate
- Follow-up support will be provided

Representation and Role Models

Youth Start recognises the importance of representation and positive role models in mentorship.

Diverse Mentor Workforce

- Youth Start will work to ensure that the mentor workforce reflects the diversity of candidates
- Young people will have access to mentors from diverse backgrounds

- Young people from underrepresented groups will have access to mentors who share their background or identity
- Mentors from diverse backgrounds will be valued and supported

Positive Role Models

- Mentors will be positive role models who demonstrate inclusive values and behaviours
 - Mentors will share their experiences and perspectives to inspire and support young people
 - Mentors will challenge stereotypes and promote positive representations of diverse groups
 - Mentors will demonstrate commitment to equality and inclusion
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Monitoring and Evaluation

Youth Start is committed to monitoring and evaluating the diversity and inclusion of mentorship.

Data Collection

Youth Start will collect data on:

- The diversity of candidates participating in mentorship (age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background)
- The diversity of mentors (age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation)
- Participation rates and outcomes for young people from different backgrounds
- Feedback from young people on the inclusivity of mentorship
- Feedback from mentors on their training and support

Data Protection:

- All data will be collected, stored, and processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Data will be used only for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- Data will be kept secure and confidential
- Young people and mentors will be informed about data collection and use

Analysis and Reporting

Youth Start will:

- Analyse data to identify patterns and trends in participation and outcomes
- Identify any disparities in participation or outcomes for young people from different backgrounds
- Identify any barriers to participation or inclusion
- Report findings to senior management and stakeholders
- Use findings to inform improvements to mentorship practice

Continuous Improvement

Youth Start will:

- Use monitoring and evaluation findings to improve mentorship practice
 - Identify and implement actions to address any barriers to inclusion
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken
 - Share learning and best practice with mentors and staff
 - Review and update this policy in light of findings
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Reasonable Adjustments

Youth Start is committed to making reasonable adjustments to support young people with disabilities and additional support needs.

What are Reasonable Adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the way mentorship is delivered to ensure that young people with disabilities or additional support needs can participate fully and effectively.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- Providing mentorship in an accessible location
- Providing additional time for mentorship sessions
- Providing communication support (sign language interpreter, communication support)
- Providing mentorship materials in accessible formats (large print, Braille, easy read, audio)
- Adapting mentorship activities to suit different learning styles
- Providing additional breaks during mentorship sessions
- Providing mentorship at different times to suit individual needs
- Providing one-to-one mentorship instead of group mentorship
- Providing mentorship in a different location (home, workplace, community centre)
- Providing additional support or coaching

Requesting Reasonable Adjustments

Young people can request reasonable adjustments at any point during mentorship. Requests should be made to their mentor or to Youth Start staff.

Process:

- The young person will discuss their needs with their mentor or Youth Start staff
 - Youth Start will assess the request and consider what adjustments are reasonable
 - Youth Start will discuss the adjustments with the young person
 - Adjustments will be implemented and reviewed regularly
 - The young person will be supported to provide feedback on the effectiveness of adjustments
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Responsibilities

All Staff and Mentors

All staff members and mentors are responsible for:

- Understanding and complying with this policy
- Treating all young people with respect and dignity
- Creating an inclusive mentorship environment
- Using inclusive language and avoiding stereotypes
- Being aware of their own biases and working to challenge them
- Reporting discrimination and harassment
- Supporting young people who have experienced discrimination
- Participating in training on diversity and inclusion
- Reflecting on their practice and identifying areas for development

Mentors

Mentors are responsible for:

- Delivering inclusive mentorship
- Making reasonable adjustments to support young people's needs
- Creating a safe and supportive mentorship environment
- Challenging discrimination and harassment
- Signposting young people to appropriate support services
- Providing feedback on mentorship and any barriers to inclusion
- Participating in supervision and support

Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that mentors are trained on diversity and inclusion
- Providing supervision and support to mentors
- Monitoring mentorship practice for inclusivity
- Investigating and responding to reports of discrimination
- Supporting young people who have experienced discrimination
- Identifying and implementing improvements to mentorship practice
- Monitoring diversity data and outcomes

Senior Management

Senior management is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring compliance with UK equality legislation
- Providing resources and support for diversity and inclusion initiatives



- Monitoring diversity data and outcomes
 - Reviewing and updating this policy
 - Promoting a culture of inclusion and respect across Youth Start
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Complaints and Grievances

Young people who have experienced discrimination or feel that this policy has not been followed can make a complaint.

How to Complain:

- Young people can make a complaint to their mentor, a Youth Start staff member, or Nick Calin (contact@youthstart.co.uk)
- Complaints can be made verbally or in writing
- Complaints can be made confidentially or anonymously
- Young people will not be victimised for making a complaint

Complaints Process:

- Complaints will be acknowledged within five working days
- The complaint will be investigated promptly and fairly
- The young person will be kept informed of progress
- The outcome will be communicated in writing
- Young people will be offered support throughout the process

Further Support:

- Young people can seek advice from external organisations, including:
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission: www.equalityhumanrights.com
 - Citizens Advice Bureau: www.citizensadvice.org.uk
 - ACAS: www.acas.org.uk
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Monitoring and Review

This Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains current and effective. The review considers:

- Changes to UK equality legislation
- Feedback from young people and mentors
- Monitoring and evaluation findings
- Best practice guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other bodies
- Incidents or concerns relating to discrimination or inclusion
- Changes to Youth Start's mentorship practice

Youth Start will monitor:

- The diversity of candidates and mentors
 - Participation rates and outcomes for young people from different backgrounds
 - Reports of discrimination or harassment
 - Feedback from young people on inclusivity
 - The effectiveness of reasonable adjustments
 - Mentor training and development
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Contact Information

If you have any questions about this Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy, or if you wish to report discrimination or harassment, please contact Youth Start Limited using the following contact details:

Youth Start Limited

Registered Office: 370 Osmaston Park Road, Derby, DE24 8FB

Email: contact@youthstart.co.uk

Telephone: 07470435603

Website: youthstart.co.uk

Relationship with Other Policies

This Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Mentorship Standards Policy
 - Candidate Privacy Notice
 - Complaints & Dispute Resolution Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Code of Conduct
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Last Updated: 1 January 2026

Next Review Date: 1 January 2027