

POLICY – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Children Universal

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy
Approval Date	Feb 2026
Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
Next Review Date	June 2029
Version No.	002
Policy Level	Homes, Supported Accommodation and Education
Staff groups affected	All Homes, Supported Accommodation and Education Staff

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Responsible Individual or Senior Leader. A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to this policy to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

Local or service-level alterations within homes and supported accommodation services are not approved may not be made without approval through the organisation's policy governance process.



Michelle Blackburn, Headteacher, 01/03/2026



Richard George, Regional Lead, 01/03/2026

Term	Definition
Children	Under 18's we support
Learners	Any pupil/student
Adults we support	Over 18's we support
Staff	Employees, contractors
Volunteers	Volunteers/work experiences
External professionals	Social workers, medical professionals, advocates, therapists, teachers etc
Stakeholders	Parents, families, neighbours etc
Internal partner services	HR, L&D, CQR, Finance etc
Regulator(s)	OFSTED, CIW, CIS, Estyn, ES
Divisional Director	MDs/Directors
Regional Manager	Refers to the senior leader with regional or multi service oversight - including roles such as Regional Manager, Responsible Individual (RI), Nominated Individual (NI), Service Directors, or Exec Lead etc. ** The job title varies across the business ** Where statutory/regulatory duties apply to a specific role, these duties remain unchanged and must be fulfilled by the appropriate role in line with legislation and regulation.
Service Manager	Refers to the senior operational leader responsible for the day-to-day running of a service, including roles such as Home Manager, Registered Manager, Head Teacher, Principal, or Exec Head depending on service type and regulatory context. ** The job title varies across the business ** Where statutory or regulatory duties apply to a specific role, these duties remain unchanged and must be fulfilled by the appropriate role in line with legislation and regulation.
Service	Home/supported accommodation/school/college/fostering
Organisation	Children's services brands that are part of the CareTech organisation
Group	Children's services
Division	Directors portfolio
Region	Regionals portfolio

Glossary – Use of Terms

The organisation uses standard umbrella terms across its policies to support consistency and clarity across different service types, structures and nations.

These terms describe levels of responsibility, not job titles, and are intended to help staff understand accountability without requiring policies to list every role used across the organisation.

Where a policy applies to a specific nation, regulated service or statutory framework, any statutory roles and legal duties named within that policy take precedence over glossary terms and must be fulfilled by the appropriately appointed individual in line with legislation and regulation.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets the standard for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across our services:

- **England:** homes, supported accommodation, schools and further education
- **Scotland:** homes and schools
- **Wales:** homes, schools and further education

It applies to all children, learners and adults we support (under and over 18), including those moving between children's and adult services.

In supported accommodation, we recognise the distinction between support and care. We ensure individuals receive equitable, inclusive support while maintaining clear safeguarding arrangements and appropriate escalation where care needs or risks increase.

We are committed to rights-based, anti-oppressive and trauma-responsive practice, balanced with clear safeguarding responsibilities. We promote safety, belonging, dignity and opportunity for every person who uses our services.

We ensure continuity of equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments during transitions, including between services and into adulthood, with alignment between children's and adult safeguarding frameworks.

2. Principles

- **Rights and non-discrimination**
We uphold the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and UNCRC. No individual will be treated less favourably due to a protected characteristic. We proactively remove barriers to access, participation and progress.



- **Person-centred and inclusive practice**
Care, support and education reflect individual identity, culture, language, beliefs, strengths and needs, including SEND/ALN/ASN.
- **Participation and voice**
Children, learners and adults we support are enabled to express their views and influence decisions affecting them, with advocacy where needed.
- **Trauma-responsive and safe practice**
We recognise the impact of adversity and discrimination. We promote relational and therapeutic approaches that do not compromise safeguarding responsibilities. Staff balance empathy and understanding with clear professional boundaries, risk management and statutory duties.
- **Safeguarding and accountability**
We work in line with safeguarding frameworks across all nations and age groups, ensuring concerns are identified, recorded and acted on promptly.
- **Intersectionality and inclusion**
We recognise that individuals may experience overlapping disadvantage (for example, disability, race, gender and care experience) and adapt support accordingly.
- **Wider vulnerability**
We recognise that disadvantage may also arise from care experience, trauma and socio-economic factors, and we address these alongside protected characteristics.
- **Adult rights and autonomy**
For adults, we promote autonomy, choice and independence, while balancing this with duties relating to safeguarding, risk management and, where applicable, mental capacity.

3. Service Application

This policy is applied across:

- **Homes** – inclusive, relational care that promotes identity, safety and belonging
- **Supported accommodation** – equitable support that promotes independence within clear safeguarding boundaries
- **Schools** – inclusive education, reasonable adjustments and removal of barriers to learning
- **Further education** – accessible adult learning and participation with appropriate support

Expectations are adapted to each service type while maintaining consistent equality, safeguarding and trauma-responsive standards.

4. Outcomes

We evidence that:

- Individuals develop a strong sense of identity, safety and belonging
 - Care, education and support are personalised, including SEND/ALN/ASN needs
 - Participation, progress and outcomes are equitable
 - Discrimination is challenged and reduced
 - Transitions are planned and inclusive
 - Staff confidently deliver inclusive, trauma-responsive and safe practice
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5. Definitions

- **Equality** – fair access, opportunity and treatment
 - **Diversity** – recognising and valuing difference
 - **Inclusion** – active participation and belonging for all
 - **Protected characteristics** – as defined by the Equality Act 2010
 - **Prohibited conduct** – discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failure to make reasonable adjustments
 - **SEND / ALN / ASN** – additional support needs across England, Wales and Scotland
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6. Responsibilities

These responsibilities apply to all staff and, where relevant, volunteers and external professionals working within our services.

All Staff:

- Promote inclusion and challenge discrimination
- Deliver personalised, inclusive care, education and support
- Use culturally competent and accessible communication
- Make and review reasonable adjustments
- Record, report and escalate safeguarding or equality concerns
- Work in partnership with education, health, social care and other agencies
- Participate in training and supervision

Managers:

- Ensure implementation across all services (homes, supported accommodation, schools and further education)
- Embed EDI, SEND/ALN/ASN and trauma-responsive practice



- Ensure effective multi-agency working
 - Monitor outcomes across protected and vulnerable groups
 - Maintain effective safeguarding systems for children and adults
 - Promote equality in recruitment, retention and progression
 - Ensure environments and resources are inclusive and accessible
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7. Access, Participation and Reasonable Adjustments

We ensure environments, routines and provision are accessible across all services.

We provide and regularly review reasonable adjustments, including:

- Alignment with EHCP / IDP / ASN plans
- Communication support (e.g. interpreters, AAC, BSL, Makaton)
- Assistive technology and sensory support strategies

Adjustments enable full participation in care, education, independence and community life.

8. Personalisation and Culture

Care and education plans reflect identity, including:

- Culture, language and faith
- Family and relationships
- Diet, self-expression and personal care

We promote positive identity and belonging, challenge stereotyping and ensure representation across environments and resources.

9. Education, Learning and Opportunity

We promote equitable access to learning, achievement and enrichment.

We ensure:

- Targeted support for SEND/ALN/ASN and care-experienced individuals
- Barriers to attendance and participation are addressed
- Equal access to activities, qualifications and future pathways



Responses to behaviour are fair, proportionate and non-discriminatory, informed by trauma while maintaining clear boundaries to ensure safety.

10. Information, Monitoring and Oversight

We collect and review information sensitively to:

- Monitor participation, progress and outcomes
 - Identify and address inequality
 - Drive continuous improvement
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11. Training and Supervision

Staff receive training appropriate to their role, including:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- SEND / ALN / ASN
- Safeguarding (children and adults)
- Trauma-responsive practice

Supervision supports reflective, accountable and inclusive practice.

12. Complaints and Feedback

We provide accessible ways to raise concerns, including advocacy.

We:

- Ensure access to independent advocacy where needed
 - Respond promptly and fairly
 - Address discrimination or bias
 - Use feedback to improve services
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13. Governance and Legal Framework

Detailed legal, regulatory and service-specific requirements are set out in the appendices, including:

- Nation-specific frameworks (England, Scotland, Wales)



- Service-specific requirements (homes, supported accommodation, schools and further education)
- Relevant regulators and inspection expectations

Appendix A — England

This appendix outlines the key legislation, statutory guidance and inspection frameworks underpinning equality, diversity, inclusion and safeguarding across services in England, for children, learners and adults we support.

Homes

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and Quality Standards

- **Means:** Statutory framework governing the operation of children's homes in England.
 - **Requires:** Non-discriminatory care, promotion of identity, dignity and equal access to opportunities.
 - **Our stance:** Equality and inclusion are embedded in all aspects of care planning and daily practice.
 - **Implementation example:** Care plans reflect identity, culture and SEND needs; routines and activities are inclusive and reviewed.
 - **Inspection framework:** Ofsted – Social Care Common Inspection Framework (Children's Homes)
 - **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/541/contents>
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Supported Accommodation

Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023

- **Means:** Legal framework for accommodation with support for 16–17-year-olds.
- **Requires:** Safe environments, appropriate support (not care), and safeguarding arrangements. Providers must demonstrate clear boundaries between support and care.
- **Our stance:** We maintain a clear distinction between support and care while ensuring inclusion, safety and effective safeguarding.
- **Implementation example:** Support plans promote independence; risks are identified early and escalated appropriately.
- **Inspection framework:** Ofsted – Supported Accommodation Inspection Framework (2023)
- **Links:** [The Supported Accommodation \(England\) Regulations 2023](#)



Education (Schools and Further Education – Cross-Service)

Children and Families Act 2014 (SEND)

- **Means:** Statutory framework for supporting children and young people with SEND across schools and further education.
- **Requires:** Providers must identify, assess and meet needs, make reasonable adjustments, and deliver provision aligned to EHCPs.
- **Our stance:** SEND is embedded across education provision and linked to wider care and support planning.
- **Implementation example:** EHCP outcomes reflected in teaching, support strategies and transition planning.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents>

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges in England.
- **Requires:** Providers must identify and respond to safeguarding risks, including those linked to discrimination, exclusion and vulnerability.
- **Our stance:** Safeguarding and equality are integrated in all decision-making and practice.
- **Implementation example:** Staff recognise links between vulnerability, discrimination and safeguarding risk.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Schools

Independent School Standards (ISS) Regulations 2014

- **Means:** Regulatory framework for independent schools.
- **Requires:** Schools must actively promote equality, prevent discrimination, promote fundamental British values, and maintain effective arrangements for behaviour, safeguarding and welfare.
- **Our stance:** Equality, inclusion and SEND support are embedded across teaching, behaviour and safeguarding systems.
- **Implementation example:** Inclusive curriculum and behaviour approaches are embedded.
- **Inspection framework:** Ofsted – Education Inspection Framework (EIF)



- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents>
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Cross-Service (England)

Equality Act 2010

- **Means:** Core legislation protecting individuals from discrimination.
 - **Requires:** Elimination of discrimination, reasonable adjustments and promotion of equality.
 - **Our stance:** Equality is embedded across all services.
 - **Implementation example:** Monitoring outcomes and addressing disparities.
 - **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
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Care Act 2014

- **Means:** Legal framework for adult care and support.
 - **Requires:** Promotion of wellbeing, safeguarding of adults at risk, and person-centred care.
 - **Our stance:** Adult services promote independence and inclusion while managing risk.
 - **Implementation example:** Support plans reflect individual needs and safeguarding considerations.
 - **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents>
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Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

- **Means:** Statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance.
- **Requires:** Information sharing, early help and coordinated safeguarding responses.
- **Our stance:** Safeguarding is embedded across services.
- **Implementation example:** Multi-agency planning and escalation of concerns.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>