



Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Sandco (South East) Ltd trading as BYND Mentoring

Policy owner and approving lead Sam Watson

Effective date 15 September 2026 | Review date 15 September 2027

Version 1.0

Our commitment

BYND is committed to treating people fairly, respecting their differences and removing barriers to participation. Young people, families and colleagues must be able to access our work and raise concerns without discrimination, harassment or retaliation. We recognise that fair treatment may require different support for different people.

Who this policy covers

This policy applies to our work with young people aged 5 to 18 across Kent and Medway, their parents and carers, applicants, employees, freelance mentors, therapists and anyone acting on BYND's behalf. It covers recruitment, working arrangements and services in schools, homes and community venues, together with work-related communications and events.

Our services include mentoring and therapeutic support, with counselling delivered by qualified BACP-registered counsellors. Everyone working for BYND must follow this policy alongside our safeguarding requirements and professional boundaries.

Equality and the law

We comply with the Equality Act 2010 and applicable employment and service-provider duties. The Act's nine protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The precise legal protections vary between employment and services. In particular, the services provisions on age discrimination do not apply to under-18s, and marriage and civil partnership is not a protected characteristic for service provision. Our commitment to fair treatment applies throughout our work.

We also take account of barriers linked to poverty, care experience, family circumstances, language and additional needs. These factors must not lead staff to make assumptions about a person's ability, behaviour or potential.

Contact us

hello@gobynd.org | 01227 686787
Unit 40, District Park, Manston Road, Kent, CT9 4JZ

1 Fair access and inclusive support

Individual needs and fair decisions

Decisions about referrals, support and allocation of workers must use relevant information about the young person's needs, the service requested, available capacity and our competence to deliver safely. We will not refuse support because of stereotypes about a protected characteristic or a diagnosis. Where a request falls outside our service, explain the reasons respectfully and consider an appropriate alternative or signposting.

Listen to young people and involve them in planning and reviewing their support in a way they understand. Work with parents, carers, schools and other professionals where appropriate, while respecting confidentiality and safeguarding requirements. Avoid assumptions about family structure, culture, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

Reasonable adjustments

We anticipate barriers disabled people may face in using our services and take reasonable steps to remove substantial disadvantage. We must not wait for every barrier to be raised as a complaint. We also consider adjustments for disabled applicants and workers in accordance with the relevant legal duty. A formal diagnosis is not a prerequisite for discussing or providing practical support.

- Consider communication aids, accessible documents, plain language, visual prompts, interpreters or support from a trusted person.
- Consider quieter spaces, sensory needs, breaks, changes to the pace or length of sessions, and predictable routines.
- Check physical access and the suitability of rooms, equipment and activities before delivery; arrange an accessible alternative where needed.

Requests can be made verbally or in writing to the worker, Sam or Daisy. Discuss what would help, record the agreed adjustment and who will arrange it, and review whether it works. Seek specialist advice where needed. If an adjustment is not reasonable, explain the specific reasons and consider effective alternatives. A disabled person will not be charged for an adjustment that BYND is legally required to make.

Agree responsibilities with the school or venue, including practical arrangements before a session. Working on another organisation's premises does not remove BYND's own duties. Risk assessments must be individual and evidence-based; broad claims about safety must not be used to avoid considering adjustments.

Respectful practice

Use respectful language, check how people wish to be addressed and challenge slurs, stereotyping and humiliating behaviour. Choose activities and materials that reflect different lives without reducing people to labels. Respect lawful beliefs and differences of opinion while maintaining everyone's dignity and preventing discriminatory conduct.

Any issue involving privacy, personal care, facilities or sex-based provision must be considered under current law, safeguarding needs and the individual circumstances. Staff must seek advice from the policy lead where uncertain and must not improvise blanket exclusions or promise arrangements outside BYND's authority.

Safeguarding remains immediate

Discriminatory bullying, harassment and exclusion can also be safeguarding concerns. Follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy immediately where a child may be at risk. Consider disability and communication needs when recognising harm; do not dismiss a disclosure or behaviour change as simply part of a diagnosis.

2 A fair and respectful workplace

Recruitment and working opportunities

Use clear role requirements and consistent, relevant selection criteria. Assess applicants on skills, competence and suitability, including safeguarding checks. Avoid unnecessary requirements that disadvantage particular groups. Offer reasonable adjustments to recruitment and interviews, and ask about health or disability before an offer only within lawful exceptions.

Apply fair criteria to pay, work allocation, training, development, promotion and decisions about continuing employment or freelance engagements. Meet equal-pay obligations and assess requests for flexible arrangements fairly. Treat pregnancy, maternity and other statutory family leave appropriately. Positive action may be considered only where lawful and proportionate; selection must not use unlawful preferences or quotas.

Unacceptable conduct

BYND prohibits unlawful discrimination and expects professional conduct even where a behaviour does not meet the legal threshold for a claim. This includes conduct in person, through work messages, online and at work-related events.

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic, including association or perceived characteristics where the law applies.
- Indirect discrimination: an apparently neutral rule or practice that puts a protected group and an individual at a disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified where justification is permitted.
- Disability discrimination: unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising from disability, or failure to make reasonable adjustments where required.
- Harassment: unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- Victimisation: disadvantaging someone because they raised or supported an equality complaint or carried out another protected act.

Bullying, offensive jokes, unwanted sexual attention, intrusive personal questions and deliberate exclusion are not accepted. Intention alone does not decide whether conduct is acceptable; its effect and the circumstances matter. An honestly raised complaint will not result in punishment merely because it is not upheld.

Preventing harassment

Sam is responsible for ensuring that BYND takes all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. Assess risks in lone working, home visits, supervision, work messaging and contact with schools, families and other third parties. Explain expected behaviour, provide reporting routes and suitable training, and put practical controls in place. Review these controls after incidents and when working arrangements change.

Staff should challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe and report incidents or risks promptly. They are not required to confront the person concerned. BYND will act on harassment by colleagues, freelancers and third parties, with proportionate measures to protect those affected. Responses involving young people must also consider age, understanding, additional needs and safeguarding.

Accountability

Sam oversees implementation, resources and review. Workers must understand this policy, complete relevant induction and updates, apply agreed adjustments, and report concerns. Managers must address problems promptly and fairly. Breaches may lead to training, management action, disciplinary action up to dismissal, or termination of an engagement, following a fair process.

3 Raising concerns and checking our practice

You can tell us in a way that works for you

A young person, parent, carer, school, applicant or worker can raise an equality concern in person, by telephone or by email. A young person may tell their mentor, counsellor, another trusted adult or their school. Staff must help them communicate the concern and pass it to the appropriate lead. A formal written complaint is not required to be listened to.

Contact Sam Watson at hello@gobynd.org or 01227 686787. If the concern involves Sam, contact Daisy Watson at Daisy@gobynd.org. If it involves Daisy, contact Sam. The person complained about must not investigate or decide their own case. Where neither lead can act impartially, BYND must arrange a suitably independent person to handle the matter and explain the arrangements to the complainant.

Offer communication support, an accessible meeting and support from a trusted person or representative. Do not require a complainant to resolve matters informally or meet the person complained about. Consider anonymous reports as far as the available information allows, explaining any limitations where contact is possible.

How we respond

Record the concern, acknowledge it promptly and explain who will deal with it, the process and expected timescale. Consider immediate protection or adjustments, hear the relevant accounts and examine evidence fairly. Keep the person informed about delays. Explain the outcome and available review or appeal route, while respecting other people's confidentiality.

Service complaints are handled through BYND's complaints arrangements; employee concerns use the appropriate grievance process and applicable accompaniment rights. If a review is requested, arrange someone impartial who was not responsible for the original decision, using external support if necessary. These routes do not restrict statutory rights or access to independent advice.

If there is a child protection issue or an allegation about an adult working with children, use the safeguarding and LADO referral routes without delay. Do not wait for a complaint investigation. Call 999 in an emergency.

Confidentiality and learning

Share information only with those who need it to address the concern, fulfil legal duties or protect someone. Do not promise absolute secrecy. Store records securely, restrict access and retain them for a justified period under BYND's data-protection arrangements. Equality monitoring, if undertaken, must have a clear purpose and lawful basis, with any required additional condition for sensitive data. Do not make unnecessary personal disclosure a condition of support.

At least annually, Sam will review access barriers, requests for adjustments, complaints, recruitment and work-allocation decisions, staff training and feedback from young people, families and schools. Use proportionate information, avoiding identification of individuals in small groups. Record improvements, assign responsibility and check that changes work. Review this policy sooner when the law, guidance or BYND's services change.

Independent advice and reference guidance

[GOV.UK Discrimination rights and protected characteristics](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/discrimination-rights-and-protected-characteristics)

[GOV.UK Reasonable adjustments for disabled workers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers)

[Acas Discrimination and the Equality Act 2010](https://www.acas.org.uk/dispatch.cfm?cid=101)

[Acas Preventing sexual harassment at work](https://www.acas.org.uk/dispatch.cfm?cid=101)

[Equality Advisory and Support Service Discrimination advice](https://www.equalityadvisoryandsupport.org/discrimination-advice)