



KIDS' statement of intent on equality, diversity and inclusion

This statement sets out our commitment to engage with and act on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion that affect the people we work with and our staff. It comes directly from our strategy for 2022-2027

(<https://www.kids.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=19d0ef5c-39d0-46e8-b70a-d4ec994f6c72>), which explains how equality, diversity and inclusion are core organisational values, reflected in our new vision and mission. Our commitment will be led by the Board who will hold the executive leadership team accountable for its delivery. We will develop our practices through dialogue with KIDS' staff and our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion forum who will provide guidance and support, ensuring we are led by those with expertise and lived experience.

Our history and why equality, diversity and inclusion matter to us

"It made me feel that I'm not alone and included", young person attending a KIDS service

KIDS was started in 1970 by John Mulcahy, a teacher who wanted a disabled child in his class to have the same opportunities as the other children. He worked in partnership with the child's mother and soon after set up KIDS' first project, a holiday scheme for twelve children. Over fifty years later, the principles of equality, partnerships and inclusion continue. They are evident in the way our team works alongside disabled children, young people and their families; the trusted and empowering relationships that are formed. Our new vision enshrines this commitment: 'A society where disabled children, young people and their families enjoy equal rights and opportunities'. Now we must define in more depth what equality, diversity and inclusion mean for KIDS, for the people we support and for our staff.

Our strategy for 2022-2027

We are proud of our work, but we know there is much more to do, which is why our new strategy specifically acknowledges the obstacles some disabled children and young people face because of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or belief, class or other aspects of their identity. Responding to the young people we consulted during the strategy development, we will develop an equality, diversity and inclusion plan centred on the rights and opportunities of disabled children and young people to be respected, included and recognised. We will consult with young people to co-create a campaign that challenges the negative attitudes about disability that can limit their choices and enjoyment of life. We will raise awareness and promote dialogue about the systematic inequalities experienced by disabled children, young people and their families.

KIDS benefits from different sources of expertise, including disabled staff, and staff and trustees with lived experience of disability as family members. We will strive to be an inclusive and diverse workplace and to value the different identities and



perspectives each individual brings. We know we need an equality, diversity and inclusion programme for staff that is shaped by and meaningful to all our colleagues.

Our Speak Up goal will see KIDS be vocal about key equality, diversity and inclusion issues, for example the right for disabled children and young people to be digitally included and how services must adapt to make this a reality. Accessibility is key and we will explore ways of communicating that bring us closer to different groups.

Finally, in order to make progress, we must improve the quality and accuracy of our diversity data to strengthen our understanding of the demographics of the people we support, our staff and volunteers and to inform our priorities.

Taking action

In 2021, we developed an equality, diversity and inclusion plan with actions on all protected characteristics, as well as mental health. We started a programme of dialogue and awareness-raising within KIDS, with a strong focus on our staff and a consultation across KIDS which has brought equality and diversity issues to the fore and made them integral to our new strategy. A staff forum has been set up to steer progress and the new strategy commits us to the priorities set out above. These actions saw KIDS explicitly bring equality, diversity and inclusion issues into the open as 'core business', vital to the experiences of people using our services and to our whole team.

Next, as part of our strategy implementation, we will develop clear definitions, objectives and measures of success, mechanisms for checking our progress and required resources. We will establish which groups of disabled children and young people are under served and where KIDS can make the most difference.

With the clarity of our new strategy, we will determine which equality, diversity and inclusion actions to prioritise in 2022-23, for staff to shape and benefit from. The action plan contains the detail; we will complement this with other materials (e.g., an annual 'Culture and Well-being' survey) to produce a summary document that brings together equality, diversity inclusion and mental health/well-being with wider issues of culture and belonging as One Team KIDS. As we develop medium- and longer-term plans and identify the required resources, we will also act quickly, by taking small steps that can make a difference, for example in communications and recruitment.

Next steps – in summary

1. Actively seek people's views and insights, internally and externally, to define impactful and realistic goals and actions.
2. Improve the quality and accuracy of our diversity data to inform our priorities. Strengthen our understanding of the identities of staff and the people we work with

3. Build the development and resourcing of accessible materials into our communications plans. Produce an accessible version of this document for the young people we work with.



Giving
disabled children
a **brighter future**