

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy



About us

We are the British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists.

We are the only UK body that represents the interests of prosthetic and orthotic professionals and associate members to their employers, colleague Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and all groups that are involved in the field of prosthetics and orthotics. We enjoy the support of a high majority of the profession as members.

We encourage high standards of prosthetic and orthotic practice. We are committed to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and education to enhance standards of prosthetic and orthotic care.

To do this, we do the following.

- Lobby organisations involved in prosthetics and orthotics to promote and maintain our members' clinical excellence and service to the patient.
- Publish guidelines for best practice.
- Work within an ethical code.
- Organise prosthetic and orthotic events, including an annual conference.
- Manage and distribute information relating to members and our Allied Health Professional colleagues.
- Develop and run educational courses.
- Promote and enable CPD for members.
- Provide advice to members and other interested parties.
- Provide insurance for members.

About this document

In this policy, 'we' and 'our' refers to the British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO). 'Our members' refers to BAPO members. 'Our people' refers to those who are actively involved in the delivery of BAPO's work, including our employees, office holders and volunteers.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out in clear terms our commitment to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 1.2 This applies to everything we do as an organisation – this includes our role as a membership body; influencer of the healthcare system; and employer.
- 1.3 We have produced this policy as a first step as we think it is important for our members and stakeholders that we are clear about what we want to achieve in the work we do with and for them.
- 1.4 We can then build on this over time. We know that we are at the beginning of a journey and will not always have the answers about how we can best achieve this commitment. We know that we will need to continue to work with our members and stakeholders, to review our progress, reflect, learn and improve.
- 1.5 In this policy, we summarise the legal duties around equality, diversity and inclusion. We then set out our core commitments and some high-level objectives for what we will do and explain how we will monitor our progress towards meeting them.
- 1.6 This policy should be read alongside our annual equality, diversity and inclusion action plan, which sets out the practical steps that we plan to take to implement this policy. We will keep this policy under regular review.

A note about language

- 1.7 We have used 'equality, diversity and inclusion' in this policy as this language is widely used. We acknowledge, however, that language continues to evolve in this area. We know, for example, that some people and organisations prefer to use the term 'equity' to describe that to achieve equitable outcomes, some people may need to be treated differently. We will keep the language we use under review.

2. What is 'equality, diversity and inclusion'?

2.1 We recognise that equality, diversity and inclusion are linked issues that may need to be addressed in distinct ways. This policy uses the following definitions:

Equality means ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities and is treated with the same dignity and respect. It is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that everyone's needs can be met in different ways to achieve equitable outcomes.

Diversity is about representation and valuing individuals for the different characteristics, perspectives and experiences they have to offer.

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.

3. Legal duties

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') is legislation that applies in England, Wales and Scotland. It protects people from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

3.2 The Act sets out a number of what are known as 'protected characteristics'.

3.3 They are:

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

3.4 It is unlawful under the Act to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat them less favourably than others on the grounds of a protected characteristic. This also includes discrimination based on the perception of the person – e.g. a belief that someone has a particular protected characteristic even if this is not actually true.

- Discriminate against someone for reasons relating to their association with a person on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic, unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Subject someone to harassment for reasons relating to a protected characteristic.
- Victimise someone because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination.

3.5 The Act does not apply in Northern Ireland. However, there are a range of other equality and anti-discrimination laws which achieve similar aims.¹

4. Our vision and values

4.1 Our vision and values are set out in our [strategic plan for 2022-24](#).

Our vision

BAPO will enable our members to transform lives and improve the health of the UK population, through health outcomes which significantly benefit those who receive prosthetic and orthotic care.

Our core values (TRAIT)

BAPO will embrace and adopt values which will guide the actions of our Executive and the work of all Committees. Those values are:

- Trust
- Respect
- Active
- Inclusive
- Transparent

4.2 Our work on equality, diversity and inclusion is an important part of realising this vision and living our values.

¹ <https://www.equalityni.org/Legislation>

5. Our core commitments and objectives

Our core commitments

- 5.1 We are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. This means we will:
- Ensure our members and our people are treated fairly and without discrimination.
 - Create a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes dignity and respect for all, in which individual differences and the contributions of all our members and our people are recognised and valued.
 - Promote inclusivity by enabling, encouraging and celebrating the contribution of people from diverse backgrounds to the profession and our work.
 - Take steps to identify, challenge and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
 - Play our part in removing barriers and redressing imbalances caused by inequality and unlawful discrimination.
 - Ensure decisions concerning our members and our people, including recruitment and appointment, are based on merit (apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Act).
 - Review regularly our policies, procedures and working practices to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all we do, to assess our impact and to take account of any changes in the law or good practice.

Our objectives

- 5.2 We have set out below some high-level, inexhaustive objectives which indicate what we will do to ensure our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is translated into practice.
- 5.3 We have divided these objectives into three overlapping areas: our organisation; our membership; and our profession.

Our organisation - these objectives are about us as an employer and professional body.

- We will model the behaviours we expect of our members and stakeholders by setting a good practice example in our role as an employer.
- We will actively encourage and welcome diversity amongst our employees.
- We will actively encourage and welcome diversity in our committees and ensure that their membership reflects and serves the diversity of our wider membership.

Our membership – these objectives are about what we do for our members.

- We will ensure that the services we provide for our members are inclusive and meet the needs of our diverse membership.
- We will be inclusive in our approach to communication and engagement, celebrating the contributions and achievements of members from diverse backgrounds.

Our profession – these objectives are about the profession and the services it provides.

- We will encourage people from diverse backgrounds to consider a career in the profession and support their recruitment and retention in the workforce.
- We will use our influence to shape prosthetics and orthotics education, so that programmes attract and welcome students from diverse backgrounds and equip all students to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- We will strive towards a working environment which is free of prejudice and discrimination in all its forms, including by supporting students and members to address discrimination whenever it occurs.
- We will support our members to develop as advocates and influencers in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- We will use our leadership role to influence services to strive for equal access, treatment and outcomes for all service users.

6. Monitoring our progress

- 6.1 To ensure that we deliver our commitments and meet our objectives, we will develop an equality, diversity and inclusion action plan which will set out the activities we plan to undertake each year and indicative timescales.
- 6.2 The plan will be developed with the involvement and input from a diverse group of members.
- 6.3 We will review our progress against the plan and report on our achievements to our members and stakeholders, including in our annual report.