



UNDERSTANDING PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Student Handbook on Protected Characteristics! In this guide, we'll explore what protected characteristics are, why they are important, and how they relate to fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion, and engagement (FREDIE).

What are the characteristics?

What are protected Characteristics?

Protected characteristics are a set of qualities or traits that make each person unique. These characteristics can include things like your age, disability, gender, race, religion, and more. They are called “protected” because the law in the UK says that no one should treat you unfairly or badly because of these things.

Here's why they are important:

Fairness: Imagine if someone treated you badly just because you were a boy or a girl or because of where your family comes from. That wouldn't be fair, right? Protected characteristics make sure that everyone gets treated fairly, no matter who they are.

Respect: It's important to treat everyone with respect. Protected characteristics remind us to be kind and considerate of people who are different from us. We should respect their choices, beliefs, and differences.

Equality: Protected characteristics help us achieve equality, which means giving everyone the same chances and opportunities. Whether you're a boy or a girl, young or old, or from a different background, you should have the same chance to succeed and be happy.

Diversity: Diversity is all about celebrating our differences. We live in a big world with people from all walks of life. Protected characteristics help us understand and appreciate this diversity. It's like a big puzzle where every piece is unique and important.

Inclusion: Nobody likes feeling left out or treated differently because of who they are. Protected characteristics promote inclusion, which means making sure that everyone feels welcome, valued, and part of the group.

Respect for Choices: People have the right to make choices about their lives, like who they love, what they believe in, and how they want to express themselves. Protected characteristics remind us to respect these choices and not judge others for them.

So, protected characteristics are like rules that make sure we're all treated fairly, with kindness, and without discrimination. They help create a world where everyone can be themselves, feel valued, and have a chance to shine.

Age: Protection against discrimination based on age, which includes both young and older individuals.

Disability: Protection against discrimination based on physical or mental disabilities, ensuring equal access and opportunities.

Gender Reassignment: Protection for individuals undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Protection for individuals who are married or in civil partnerships.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Protection for individuals during pregnancy, maternity leave, and after childbirth.

Race and Ethnicity: Protection against discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or nationality.

Religion or Belief: Protection against discrimination based on religion, belief, or philosophical conviction.

Sex: Protection against discrimination based on gender or sex, including both men and women.

Sexual Orientation: Protection for individuals of various sexual orientations, including heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual orientations.

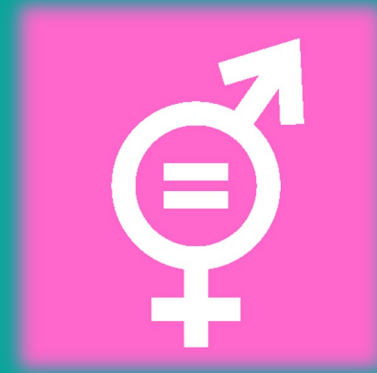


Sex: Promoting Gender Equality

The protected characteristic of sex means that people shouldn't be treated differently just because they're male or female. It reminds us that boys and girls are equal and deserve the same opportunities and respect.

- 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime.
- 41% of UK girls aged 14 to 17 in an intimate relationship experienced some form of sexual violence from their partner.
- On average, 2 women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.
- Four out of five companies and organisations in Great Britain still pay their male employees more than female ones. The median pay gap is 9.4%
- Around the world, women do three times as much unpaid care work as men

Consider - How can you promote gender equality and ensure that everyone has the same chances to succeed?



Age: Celebrating Every Stage of Life

Age is all about how old you are and the different stages of life you go through. It's important because it reminds us to respect and value people at every age. Whether you're 16 or 60. Everyone deserves a fair chance, no matter their age.

- People aged 75 and older with breast and colorectal cancer, osteoarthritis of the knee and gallstones are less likely to receive surgical treatment for their condition than people aged 65 to 75
- Older individuals who are positive about their own ageing can live 7.5 years longer than those with less positive self-perceptions of ageing
- Just 29% of TV advertisements feature characters aged 50 or older.
- The 50-year-old applicants was invited to job interviews less than half as often as a 25-year-old

Consider - How can you learn from people of different ages and build connections that bridge generational gaps?

Disability: Embracing Unique Abilities

Disability covers a wide range of physical, sensory, cognitive, and mental health conditions. It reminds us that everyone has their own unique abilities and challenges. It's like saying, "Hey, we're all different, and that's okay!" We should respect and support each other, no matter what.

- Disabled children are more likely to experience bullying at school
- Only 8% of employers report recruiting a disabled person in the past 12 months
- Disabled people are more likely to be living in poverty than non-disabled people
- Men with mental ill health are likely to die 20 years earlier and women 13 years earlier than their non-disabled peers
- Disabled people are more likely to face barriers using public transport affecting their independence

Consider - How can we contribute to making your learning environment more accessible and inclusive for students with disabilities?

Gender Reassignment: Embracing Authenticity

Gender reassignment is about supporting someone who wants to change their gender to be who they truly are, even if it's different from the gender they were assigned at birth. It's vital to respect their choice and make them feel comfortable expressing their true selves.

- Transgender people face barriers and discrimination in accessing healthcare services
- A study of 382 transgender people in the UK and Ireland found that, even within gender identity clinics, 62% of trans people had experienced negative questions, attitudes or services
- 88% of transgender people do not report the hate crimes they experience because they don't feel they will be supported
- Nearly half of transgender people have been verbally harassed because they are transgender

Consider - How can we create a welcoming and inclusive space for transgender and gender-diverse individuals in your college?

Marriage and Civil Partners: Love is Love

This characteristic reminds us that people should be treated the same, whether they're married, in a civil partnership, or not. Love is love, and it's important to respect and celebrate all forms of love and commitment.

- Gay couples could form a civil partnership from 2004, but same sex marriage was only made legal in the UK in 2013.
- Around 3.3% of all marriages are between people of the same sex
- Opposite sex couples have been able to form a civil partnership since 2019

Consider - How can you be an ally and advocate for equal love and partnership rights for all?

Pregnancy and Maternity: Supporting Life Changes

If someone's having a baby, they should still be treated fairly and with respect. This protected characteristic ensures that people get the support and understanding they need during these significant life changes

- One in five mothers (20%) said they experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer/ colleagues
- One in 25 mothers (4%) left their jobs because of risks not being tackled
- One in ten (10%) mothers were discouraged from attending antenatal appointments.
- (11%) reported that they had lost their jobs because of pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination.
- Young women aged under 25 reported higher levels of pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination than older women

Consider - How can we create a college environment that is supportive and accommodating for staff, students and visitors who are parents or parents-to-be?



INCLUSION

Race and Ethnicity: Celebrating Cultural Richness

Race and ethnicity are about the different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds that make our world rich and diverse. It's crucial to respect and celebrate these differences because they make our world fascinating and help broaden our horizons

- There are over 100,000 reported hate crimes that are racially motivated per year, the unreported number is significantly larger
- 1/3 of people from an ethnic minority background have experienced some form of racist assault
- Only 19 per cent of BME workers who had experienced harassment reported the most recent incident to their employer because they felt the employer would not act on it
- Almost two thirds (65%) of black people who responded to a survey said that they had experienced prejudice from doctors and other staff in healthcare settings. This rose to three quarters (75%) among black people aged 18 to 34

Consider - How can you learn from the cultures and backgrounds of your peers, and how can you contribute to a more inclusive college culture?

Religion or Belief: Nurturing Spiritual Diversity

Religion or belief is about an individual's faith, spirituality, and personal beliefs. It's important to respect and understand that people have different ways of connecting with the world around them. We should respect their choices and beliefs.

- There are nearly 4000 recognised faiths around the globe
- In Hull around 45% of people are not religious, 42% are Christian, 5.3% are Muslim with other religions below 1% of the population

Consider - How can we show respect and understanding for different beliefs and spiritual practices within our college?

Sexual Orientation: Celebrating Love in All Forms

Sexual orientation is about respecting who someone loves. It doesn't matter if they like men, women or both - it's all okay, and we should support them. Love is love, and everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect.

- In 2020 3.1% of the population identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual
- One in eight LGBT people (13%) have experienced some form of unequal treatment from healthcare staff because they're LGBT
- Almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives
- More than a third of LGBT staff (35%) have hidden that they are LGBT at work for fear of discrimination
- 42% of LGBT+ school pupils have been bullied in the past year, double the number of non-LGBT+ pupils
- 70 countries criminalise same-sex relationships

Consider - How can you be an ally and create an inclusive space for people of all sexual orientations?

STRONGER TOGETHER



info@wilberforce.ac.uk
Call 01482 711688

Saltshouse Road,
Hull, HU8 9HD



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