

Equality & Diversity Policy (Applicants & Clients)



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland's commitment to equality and diversity. The policy also supports the rights of persons availing of goods or services under the Equal Status Acts, 2000-2011.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants and clients.

Policy

Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland (AADI) is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture in its dealings with applicants for our assistance dogs, school support dogs and buddy dogs. As a charity, it is in our best interest to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination in its dealings with any applicant.

Our aim is to ensure that all applicants and clients are given equal opportunity and that our charity is representative of all sections of society. Each applicant and client will be respected and valued and we will endeavour to give them our best service as a result.

This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equality and fairness to all our applicants and clients and we will not, and have not provided less favourable facilities or treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, or sex and sexual orientation. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All applicants will be treated fairly and with respect. When we select applicants for an assistance, school support or buddy dog, it will be on the basis they reach the criteria set out on our eligibility criteria. An exception to this are applications from existing AADI clients wishing to be considered for 'successor dogs'. These applicants will be given priority on our waiting list. Please read the *Successor Dog Policy*.

All applicants will be given any help and assistance if requested and necessary to complete their application.

AADI commits to:

1. create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all applicants and clients are recognised.
2. create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every applicant and client.
3. not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment in dealings with any applicant or client, and to discipline those staff that breach this policy.

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4. make training, development, and progression opportunities available to all staff handling applications as necessary.
5. encourage any applicant or client who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures.
6. encourage staff to treat every applicant and client with dignity and respect.
7. regularly review all our employment practices and procedures so that fairness is maintained at all times
8. monitor and review this policy annually to ensure that equality and diversity is continually promoted in the workplace.