



Public Sector Equality Duty Audit

The Priory Federation of Academies Trust

Review by: J Wilson

Reviewed: July 2026

*The Priory Federation of Academies Trust (The Trust) will adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against all stakeholders with which the organisation may be working with on the grounds of any protected characteristic.
Please refer to the Federation's Public Sector Duty audit for all actions and work relating to staff.*

The Trust's Equality Objectives for 2021-2025 were:

1. To cascade and embed ongoing equality and diversity training across the Trust, using our existing support frameworks to continue to improve understanding and to help eliminate discrimination.
2. To promote and monitor the involvement of all groups of pupils, and specifically those with protected characteristics, in the extra-curricular life of all the academies within the Trust.

The Trust's Equality Objectives for 2026 – 2030 are:

1. To develop a bespoke professional learning programme for staff on equality, diversity and inclusion which enables them to deliver high-quality, specialist training to stakeholders as required.
2. To promote and monitor the involvement of all groups of pupils, and specifically those with protected characteristics, in the extra-curricular life of all the academies within the Trust.

The context in which the Academy works:

The Priory Federation of Academies structure includes three phases - Special, Primary and Secondary. In addition to our schools, the Trust continues to work with the wider educational community, including the delivery of teacher training and apprenticeship programmes.

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:

1. Age*
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership*
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

*These characteristics apply to the Trust as employers, but not in relation to our provision for students.

What do we do in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?

Map to evidence/examples/records kept.

- The HR team monitor any discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation incidents across the Trust. Where reports are made the HR Team ensure that policies and processes are followed to ensure staff are fully supported throughout the process.
- The Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group monitor any student on staff bullying, harassment or sexual harassment incidents. Further training and guidance is provided to staff and students as and when required.
- At the time of the review, staff feedback identifies that the Trust takes any reports seriously and acts upon any concerns in a timely manner and in line with Trust Policy.
- The Trust policies identify a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation. Staff access these policies as part of their on-boarding, Induction and as/when these are updated, these are all available on the Trust website.
- At the time of review, statistics show that the Trust's workforce is diverse given the context (geographical) in which recruitment takes place. There are a significant number of women in leadership positions and this is supported by the Gender Pay Gap data. The Trust have a flexible working policy which all staff are eligible to apply.
- Monitoring of recruitment allows the Trust to review the profile of our workforce and shows a good level of diversity given the context (geographical) in which recruitment takes place.
- The recruitment process does not allow for any discrimination, candidates complete an equal opportunities monitoring form which is not shared with the shortlisting panel.
- When arranging interview days, reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that candidates are not at a disadvantage, as a result of a protected characteristic and are able to attend.
- Risk assessments and reasonable adjustments are put in place, if required, for any member of staff who is protected under a disability, whether mental or physical.
- Support is provided through the HR Team to any staff who wish to transition, in line with Trust Policy.
- The Trust has a number of policies in place to support staff who are caring for dependants who may have a disability, to ensure they can attend medical appointments.
- Absence procedures and policies allow for reasonable adjustments, risk assessments, occupational health and counselling for all staff with a protected characteristic.
- Adult Mental Health First Aid Training is in place for Wellbeing Champions and relevant members of staff across the Trust.
- The Trust's Wellbeing Strategy Group, which has representatives from across the Trust, has focused on educating leaders about mental health and how best to support staff who might be experiencing mental health problems.
- The Trust employs an EDI Champion who works across all academies training staff and governors and collating student and staff voice.

Lincolnshire ITT

- For applications to Lincolnshire ITT, staff do not have access to any protected characteristics until the offer of a place has been accepted.
- When interviewing candidates for Lincolnshire ITT, a member of staff who is not on the interview panel asks the compulsory questions to avoid unconscious bias at interview.

- The Lincolnshire ITT training programme for trainee teachers, includes training on protected characteristics and unconscious bias to ensure all children and young people have the same access to education.
- The Lincolnshire ITT has access to a HR Business Partner who is Mental Health First Aid (Adult) trained.
- When arranging interview days for ITT Trainees, reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that candidates are not at a disadvantage.

Priory Apprenticeships

- Staff recruited to work for Priory Apprenticeships are employed by the Trust, therefore the above points apply. Where staff are working for Priory Apprenticeships who are not employed by the Trust, for example under a secondment agreement, the process does not allow for any discrimination. Full recruitment checks are undertaken and the Trust's overarching policies are extended to those who are not employed.
- Priory Apprenticeships has access to a HR Business Partner who is Mental Health First Aid (Adult) trained.
- For apprentices based on non-Trust sites, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments are put in place, if required, for any apprentices who are protected under a disability, whether mental or physical.
- When arranging interview days for apprentices, reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that candidates are not at a disadvantage.

What do we do to engage with the protected groups in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations? Map to evidence/records kept.

- The Trust has an embedded Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group which includes a Development Strategy.
- HR hold modular HR clinics at each Academy site, offering opportunities for staff to discuss any concerns. This creates an open culture in which staff are encouraged to speak out if they have any queries, concerns or problems. As a result of the clinics the Trust have put together specialist workshops for staff on topics such as pensions and preparing for retirement.
- The HR Team meet with staff who have protected characteristics to discuss any support required in the workplace.
- The Trust HR system allows staff to record personal information relating to protected characteristics which allows the Trust to monitor and evaluate the staffing profile via the Equality and Diversity Working Group.
- The Wellbeing Group meets with wellbeing champions from each academy and gathers feedback on any required training and support.
- The Trust conducts an bi-annual staff survey, which includes questions on mental health, wellbeing and EDI that allows employees the opportunity to comment on any concerns.
- Absence procedures, more specifically, the return-to-work meeting, allows engagement with those who are in the protected groups, as it provides them with an opportunity to discuss the reasons for the absence. This allows the Trust to make reasonable adjustments, if required, to allow the employee to return to work with the same opportunities. It also provides them with a safe space to discuss any concerns they might have.
- Specialist support is provided to staff with mental and physical disabilities, including but not restricted to risk assessments, workstation equipment, counselling, CBT and Occupational Health referrals.
- The Trust has created a new process which is designed to support individuals as they depart for maternity leave and as they return to work. The HR Team undertake extensive training to be able to best support individuals in the workplace.
- New legislation which is in place from April 2026 requires the Trust to report and produce a Gender Pay Gap and Menopause Action Plan which will form part of the overall EDI Strategy.

How effective are we at eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?

Map to evidence/records kept.

- At the point of review all case/incident reviews statistically show little or no cases of bullying/harassment with staff.
- Staff feedback identifies that the Trust takes any report seriously and acts upon any concerns in a timely manner.
- The HR Clinics have created an open culture, which staff have embraced.
- Through early intervention, the HR clinics have prevented situations escalating and staff feel better supported and listened to.
- Any promoted posts across the Trust are appointed based on merit, not based on a protected characteristic. As a result of this, the Trust has a reasonable element of diversity in management roles (and promoted posts) considering the context in which it recruits.
- The recent staff survey showed a high percentage of staff feel valued at work and enjoy their work. Staff feel respected by their colleagues and leaders and feel able to raise concerns if they have any.
- The survey also showed that staff believe the Trust have embedded equality across the Trust and that they are willing to ask for help when they need it.

Next Steps:

- To monitor and evaluate the EDI statistics and create initiatives based on the results.
- To introduce a Gender Pay Gap and Menopause Action Plan.
- Update the EDI Strategic Plan to include new PSED targets.
- To introduce sexual harassment training for all staff.