

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The policy is applicable to all employees, secondees, agency staff, clients, communities, suppliers and contractors, whether permanent or temporary. The policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with customers and clients. Decisions relating to customers and communities will be based on business-related criteria only and any irrelevant information will not form part of the process.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Colleague"	Means people who currently work for the organisation on an employed or voluntary basis (including Trustees), extending to contractors with whom a current services agreement is in place to provide client services,
"Equality"	means treating people fairly and equally
"Diversity"	means the characteristics, experiences and cultural influences that make each of us unique as individuals
"Inclusion"	means all are welcome and will be treated with respect and dignity
"Protected characteristic"	means factors including age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnerships, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation
"Harassment"	means unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment
"Bullying"	means offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or an abuse of power that undermines, humiliates or degrades

Introduction

HACRO is fully committed to creating a working environment that makes people proud and engaged and values the contribution of all colleagues.

We respect the differences that a diverse workforce brings and will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. This also extends to other factors if it results in someone feeling bullied or harassed.

All colleagues are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that violate the policy will not be tolerated and will be addressed formally.

Bullying and Harassment

Behaviour may be classed as bullying or harassment if the colleague it is directed at feels that way, even if that was not the intention of the perpetrator. Examples of bullying and harassment:

- Verbal abuse, offensive comments or jokes
- Threatening behaviour, physically attacking or frightening someone
- Deliberately ignoring or excluding someone
- Spreading gossip
- Repeatedly not listening to someone's point of view
- Unwelcome sexual advances, suggestive/offensive remarks or gestures
- Taking away someone's responsibility without good reason

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act legislates that no one should be discriminated against due to "protected characteristics." It requires employers to ensure compliance across all aspects of employment (e.g. recruitment, training, pay and benefits, performance management, dismissal).

Types of Discrimination

Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than another individual would be treated in the same situation due to their protected characteristics or is impacted to their detriment by something because of a protected characteristic. The different types of discrimination covered by the Equality Act are as follows:

Direct Discrimination	This is where someone is treated less favourably than another individual would be treated in the same situation due to their protected characteristic. An example would be a manager who is recruiting a new team member who has already decided they won't recruit a female rather than completing the recruitment process with a view to choosing the best person for the job regardless of their gender.
Indirect Discrimination	This is where a condition, rule or policy applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages a group of people who share a protected characteristic without there being a justifiable business reason to do so. An example would be a job advertisement specifying that 10 years' experience is required when in reality the job only requires certain general skills. This would put younger applicants at a disadvantage even though they may have the necessary skills.
Discrimination by Association	This is a form of direct discrimination against a person because they are associated with someone who possesses a protected characteristic. An example is a colleague being offered a promotion which is then withdrawn after they tell their manager they are caring for their disabled mother. The manager believes the colleague will not have time to concentrate on the new job due to their carer commitments.
Discrimination by Perception	This is a form of direct discrimination where someone believes that another person possesses a protected characteristic and discriminates against them because of this "perceived" characteristic. An example is inappropriate banter and name calling relating to someone being gay when actually they are not.

When this policy takes effect: 1 July 2020

When it will be reviewed: July 2021 (or sooner if legislation changes)

Applying this Policy

The publication of this policy enables the organisation to send out a strong message of commitment, both internally and externally. It will only be brought to life if it is reinforced by action and in order to do this the organisation is committed to the following:

Leadership

We will hold our Board of Trustees and line managers accountable and ensure that they are aware of their role in championing this policy to guarantee compliance and in particular to act as a positive role model to others in the organisation.

The Board of Trustees will review and agree any aspirational targets for the workforce composition over a three-year period and assess progress at least annually.

Understanding and engaging our colleague population

We use data collected about our colleagues to help us to understand who works for the organisation and seek to ensure that their experience of our organisation is in line with the aims of this policy. We engage our colleagues for their feedback to help shape our culture and support provided to individuals.

This will be done by various methods that may include: administering a survey questionnaire to all colleagues; undertaking one-to-one interviews with key leaders and stakeholders, and facilitating focus groups to establish colleague's perception in relation to any arising key areas (including diversity perception) to explore further.

A summary report will be produced for Trustees to act as a catalyst for future activity across the organisation.

Recruitment and Selection

We aim to advertise all job opportunities as widely as possible and welcome all applications. The skills, qualifications and experience of each applicant are considered against the role profile to find the most suitable candidates, whatever their background or personal circumstances. Colleagues are promoted based upon their ability, skills and experiences which are assessed against the role profile requirements. Please refer also to the Recruitment Policy.

Working conditions

We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Any unacceptable behaviour will be managed in line with our Grievance and/or Disciplinary Policy.

Our Flexible Working and Authorised Leave Policies allow any requests from employees to be considered, whether these are to meet caring, health, territorial army, religious commitments or for any other reason.

The organisation is open to accommodating cultural and religious practices where these are reasonably practical and where there is no conflict with other legislation e.g. health and safety.

Training and Development

All colleagues will be required to confirm their acceptance and understanding of this Policy is a mandatory element of their induction. In addition, we aim to give all colleagues access

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to training and development opportunities to support them in achieving the standards required for their role, improving their performance, learning new skills and raising their levels of job satisfaction.

The performance management processes we use ensure all colleagues are clear about their job role, responsibilities and objectives and identifies individual training and development needs.

Communication

The organisation will:

- undertake an audit of existing communications channels so that compliance and inclusiveness are assured;
- establish communication methods across the organisation that encourage feedback;
- ensure that communication imagery/graphics and words used internally and externally are inclusive, and reflect and reinforce the words within this policy;
- communicate and celebrate the organisation's successes in diversity.

External profile

The organisation will network with appropriate organisations (with, for example, Business in the Community, the Prince's Responsible Business Network, Stonewall, Business Disability Forum and the Equality and Human Rights Commission) in order to build relationships, exchange best practice and generally raise the organisation's profile to develop a good external image.

Measurement

The organisation will:

- capture all available workforce metrics from existing databases to benchmark against available sector companies, demographics and best practice standards;
- establish engagement tools to assess the climate in the organisation (e.g. colleague survey, focus groups including diversity perception);
- assess progress in achieving its diversity objectives;
- develop relationships with external benchmarking bodies to assess progress

Applying this Policy to service delivery

Understanding and engaging our client population

We use data collected about our clients to help us to understand who we are providing services to and ensure that access to services happens in a fair and consistent way. We engage our clients for their feedback to help shape our services.

Training Venues

We aim to ensure any training venues selected to deliver our services are as accessible as possible to support disabled clients or those with particular needs.

Contractors and Suppliers

All contractors and suppliers that work with us are expected to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. As part of any tender process prospective suppliers are required to provide assurance that they comply with the Equality Act 2010 and demonstrate how they promote this in their approach and/or working practices, ensuring any subcontractor acts similarly.

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Taking action in response to inappropriate behaviour

Any accusation of bullying, harassment, hate incidents or discriminatory behaviour will be taken seriously. Action will be taken quickly to put a stop to it and appropriately deal with those concerned. If any reported behaviour is identified as a “hate crime/incident” this will be reported to the Police in addition to following the relevant internal policies.

If a colleague feels they have seen, heard or have been the victim of inappropriate behaviour (including from a 3rd party such as a client or supplier) they should inform their line manager as soon as possible. If the inappropriate behaviour is directed towards them by their line manager the colleague should contact The Chair initially.

Informal Resolution

Where possible, attempts will be made to resolve the matter informally at the first instance. A conversation will be held between the colleagues involved to discuss the impact of behaviour and explore possible solutions.

In some circumstances an independent mediator may be identified to help the colleagues discuss and resolve any issues. If the colleague feeling bullied/harassed needs support in this meeting they may ask a fellow colleague to be present or speak on their behalf.

If issues cannot be resolved informally, or the colleague does not agree to it being dealt with in this way the formal Grievance process (see Grievance Policy) will apply. This may in turn lead to action arising under the Disciplinary Policy.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the law, demographics and internal business requirements. Progress relating to the policy will be recorded annually and a full report will be presented to the Board of Trustees to debate progress and review the policy status.