

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

ACTTnow is committed to providing equality of opportunity in its employment policies and practices. This Policy outlines ACTTnow's commitments to equality of opportunity and should be read in conjunction with more detailed policies and procedures. This policy applies to all employees of ACTTnow and contractors / subcontractors working within its services or on its sites.

2. Statement of Intent

ACTTnow respects and values the diversity of our staff, clients and contractors. ACTTnow are committed to serving our clients in ways that are appropriate, accessible, fair and culturally sensitive. ACTTnow will be proactive in ensuring and promoting equal opportunities through everything we do and among all those people and organisations that we are associated with.

ACTTnow will make best use of the range of talents, skills, experience and different perspectives available in today's society. Thus enabling people to feel they are both respected and valued in order to achieve their potential. This is regardless of age, race, colour, ethnic background, religious belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability (including learning disability, mental ill health and HIV status), marital status, trade union membership or national or social origin.

ACTTnow recognise that individual and institutional discrimination obstructs the fundamental aims of any organisation and are therefore committed to taking any steps necessary to eliminate it. ACTTnow will aim to do this by ensuring that we consider the impact on equality and diversity of all aspects of the company's work. This will include from service delivery and development, to recruitment and employment. ACTTnow will seek to ensure that all staff are trained in respect of equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory behaviour.

The concept of 'equal opportunities' does not always mean treating everybody the same. It can mean for instance, ensuring a 'level playing field' exists and that protection from unlawful discrimination is provided. In some cases this may require 'Positive Action' measures to enable some members of society to access the services they need, on an equal footing with others.

A zero tolerance of discriminatory behaviour, including bullying, harassment and victimisation, by anyone towards anyone, on company premises or business, is endorsed throughout the organisation. Definitions of bullying and harassment are included in Appendix 1.

3. Implementation

ACTTnow recognizes its statutory obligations and will take all reasonable action to ensure that we comply with our commitments under the equalities legislation.

3.1 Recruitment, Selection & Promotion

The recruitment and selection process must result in the appointment of the most suitable person for the position based on their skills, knowledge and attributes for the role and irrespective of their race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

All managers involved in recruitment and selection will be appropriately trained; will be expected to comply with the law and this policy. They will be aware of their own assumptions and stereotyping so, as not to discriminate in their decision making.

Applicants for posts will be given clear and accurate information regarding the requirements for the post to enable them to make an informed decision on their own suitability for the job.

Appropriate placement of adverts will take place to ensure equality of access and the content will be scrutinised to ensure that they do not imply a preference for one group of applicants, unless there is a genuine occupational qualification.

The essential requirements for positions will be reviewed to ensure that they are required for the role and that they do not indirectly discriminate against any particular group.

Shortlisted applicants will be asked whether they require adjustments to enable them to access the selection process. Where possible such reasonable adjustments will be made, as long as they do not create unfair advantage. Consideration will also be given to the timing of selection procedures taking into account major religious festivals.

Recruitment and selection procedures will be equality impact assessed to ensure that they do not indirectly discriminate. Continual review will be undertaken through monitoring to identify and, so far as reasonably practicable, eliminate any areas of potential discrimination.

3.2 Training, Development and Appraisal

ACTTnow will work towards providing equality of opportunity in training and development activities. All employees will be given access to appropriate training to enable them to deliver their roles effectively.

ACTTnow will provide a range of learning opportunity options to broaden access and training courses. Where possible they will be planned to meet the needs of part time and full time staff.

Training courses, materials and other learning resources will be equality impact assessed. They will be developed to ensure that they meet the needs of a variety of learning styles.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to support those with disabilities to access training and practices will be developed to support delegates with specific learning needs, for example dyslexia.

All managers involved in implementing appraisal and developing personal development plans with staff, will be appropriately trained. Managers will be expected to be aware of their own assumptions and stereotyping. Managers will be expected to seek to support all employees to enable them to reach their potential.

New employees will be made aware of this policy, associated policies and the required standards of behaviour expected of them through induction.

3.3 Work-Life Balance

ACTTnow must balance the needs of staff with the delivery of a high quality and responsive service to its clients, but the company will review options to provide working patterns that offer increased flexibility to staff.

ACTTnow will look sensitively at individual requests for flexible working and work with an individual to try to find a mutually acceptable solution working within the framework of the legislation.

ACTTnow will seek to support those with caring responsibilities in a variety of ways. ACTTnow will seek to be sensitive to requests to support staff in religious observance for major religious festivals, but remaining mindful of the needs to deliver service.

3.4 Terms & Conditions

All employees will be made aware of the terms, conditions and benefits associated with their employment. These will be applied and accessible to them without discrimination.

Where practicable, ACTTnow will make reasonable adjustments to roles to enable disabled applicants to take up recruitment or promotion opportunities or to be redeployed after becoming disabled in employment.

ACTTnow will equality impact-assess its policies and procedures to identify discriminatory practices and will take reasonable steps to eliminate such discrimination.

3.5 Discipline & Grievance

Direct discrimination, harassment or victimization will be dealt with as serious disciplinary matters under the company's Discipline Policy. This will include staff seeking to induce others to discriminate, harass or victimize. ACTTnow's disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly to all and their application monitored.

Complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimization will be dealt with seriously and sensitively by managers. Although it is recognized that on occasion it may be difficult for a member of staff to directly approach their manager regarding such an incident and in this instance they should approach the Managing Director.

All employees have the right to raise a complaint where they feel they have been discriminated against, through the company's Grievance Procedure. This will not prejudice the employee's current employment or future prospects.

3.6 Environment

Harassment, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated! They will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. ACTTnow also recognises that workplace conflict may arise, which may not constitute harassment or bullying but may breach the principles of this Policy.

4. Complaints

Any complaints by employees relating to breaches of this Policy will be dealt with under the Grievance Procedure. Any complaints by members of the public relating to breaches of this Policy will be dealt with through the Complaints Procedure. Individuals making complaints will not be victimised for exercising their right to complain.

5. Monitoring

ACTTnow will engage with and seek feedback from its staff through a variety of means. These will include staff networks, consultation to gain feedback on its practices and to identify areas for improvement.

ACTTnow will seek to gather a range of equal opportunities data from its employees and applicants to assist it in monitoring and identifying discrimination. This information will be kept confidentially and in the case of applicants will not be accessible to individuals taking recruitment and selection decisions.

6. Review

This Policy will be formally and jointly reviewed after a period of three years unless monitoring indicates the needs for early review.

7. Responsibilities

The Director has primary legal responsibility for ensuring the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination in the delivery of services and employment. Through his approval of this Policy, strategy and their leadership of change he is responsible for ensuring that the needs of diverse groups are properly accounted for and addressed. The Director is a role model for ACTTnow, in demonstrating The organisational values. He is to ensure that a culture exists which values difference and displays "zero tolerance" of harassment and discrimination.

The Director has responsibility for the implementation of this Policy through promotion, training, monitoring and the development of more detailed human resources policies.

Health and Safety Advisors, Instructors and Plant Instructors are responsible for:

- 7.1 Adhering fully to this policy and ensuring awareness and understanding within their teams.
- 7.2 Demonstrating through their behaviours and actions at all times a commitment to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.
- 7.3 Acting to address inappropriate behaviours in their teams.
- 7.4 Guarding against assumptions and stereotyping which may influence their decision making inappropriately.
- 7.5 Take into account the impact of decisions on different groups of staff. Identify and review practices and procedures that may lead to either direct or indirect discrimination.
- 7.6 Support all staff to achieve their full potential.
- 7.7 Ensure appropriate record keeping demonstrating decision making processes in employment decisions and to allow appropriate investigation of complaints.

Individual members of staff are responsible for:

- 7.8 Always acting and speaking in a way that do not discriminate or harass
- 7.9 Always acting and speaking in a way, which values the diversity and difference of their colleagues, patients and members of the public. Treat people with dignity and respect
- 7.10 Appropriately challenging behaviours and actions in others where these contravene the spirit and statements in this Policy
- 7.11 Reporting breaches of this policy through the appropriate channels
- 7.12 Not victimising or seeking to victimise individuals who make a complaint under this Policy or under the law.

Overall responsibility for the Health and Safety Policy rests with the Director who has, where appropriate, delegated responsibility for its implementation to management as outlined in the Company's Health and Safety Policy / Procedures.

- 7.13 Health and Safety is an integral part of an effective, efficient and profitable organisation. ACTTnow' objective is to create a positive Health and Safety culture where employees, clients, contractors, visitors and members of the public are not exposed to hazards arising from its activities.
- 7.14 It is the responsibility of management to implement this Policy, to plan, organise, control, monitor and review Health and Safety performance and in particular the following:
- 7.15 The provision and maintenance of safe plant, equipment and safe systems of work
- 7.16 The provision of suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable employees, clients and contractors to perform their work safely and efficiently
- 7.17 Provide all necessary safety equipment and protective clothing and take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure it is used correctly
- 7.18 To ensure the safe transport, storage, handling and use of hazardous substances

- 7.19 Maintain a constant and continuing interest in Health and Safety and Environmental matters applicable to ACTTnow' activities. Consult with employees, clients, contractors and other authorities minimising both accidents and detrimental effects to the environment

Appendix 1

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour. An abuse or misuse of power through a means intended to undermine, denigrate or injure the recipient.

A bully is normally aware of the impact that they are having. Their behaviour is likely to be personal rather than business focused and a reasonable person could be expected to understand that the behaviour is unfair and likely to cause offence.

An employee must not confuse performance management with an act of bullying or harassment. It is the manager's responsibility to manage staff performance and apply ACTTnow's Policies and Procedures. Addressing performance or conduct issues with a member of staff will not, in itself, constitute bullying and harassment as long as it is being applied appropriately within ACTTnow's policies. This will be managed in a reasonable and fair manner, with reference to the values of dignity and respect outlined in this Policy.

Harassment

Harassment is generally defined as unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. The current legal definition is, "Unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment."

To be unlawful it will be related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and nationality but in the workplace may also relate to any personal characteristic of the individual. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

Victimisation

Victimisation is the unfair treatment of someone as a result of making a complaint.

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HARASSMENT

Harassment is generally defined as unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. The current legal definition is, *“Unwanted conduct that violates people’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.”*

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VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is the unfair treatment of someone as a result of making a complaint.

Signed



Mick Heatlie
Managing Director

Date 08/04/2022

Document history and status

Revision	Date	Description	By	Review	Approved
Initial Development	Apr 2019	Creation of formal policy document (Review - Apr 2020)	Lou Maloney	Mick Heatlie	Mick Heatlie
Review	Apr 2020	Review of formal policy document (Review - Apr 2021)	Lou Maloney	Mick Heatlie	Mick Heatlie
Review	Apr 2021	Review of formal policy document (Review - Apr 2022)	Lou Maloney	Mick Heatlie	Mick Heatlie
Review	Apr 2022	Review of formal policy document (Review - Apr 2023)	Lou Maloney	Mick Heatlie	Mick Heatlie