



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The Bigfoot Group is committed to supporting, developing and promoting a culture of diversity and equality in all of its activities based on the values of fairness, dignity and respect. The Bigfoot Group will support and develop its employees through providing access to facilities and employment on an equal basis regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity or religion/belief.

This policy builds on the foundation of equality and anti-discrimination legislation and aims to embrace diversity in all of its activities and acknowledges that variety and difference are intrinsic to the success and future development of its business.

The Bigfoot Group expects all employees, contractors and agency staff to act in accordance with this Policy.

2. Principles

The principles of the diversity and equal opportunities policy are:

- To develop and promote a culture of diversity and equality throughout the organisation;
- To develop and promote a culture of fairness, integrity and dignity;
- To support all staff, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief;
- To prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- To deal with all forms of discrimination consistently, promptly and effectively.

3. Legislative Framework

This Policy is underpinned by legislation, which places individual responsibilities on staff/service users/visitors.

Under the above Equality legislation it is unlawful to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat them less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (perception discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (discrimination by association);
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic;
- Subject someone to harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic (pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnerships are excluded);
- Victimise someone because they have made, or intends to make, a complaint or allegation or has given or intends to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination;
- Discriminate against someone in certain circumstances because of a protected characteristic after the working relationship has ended.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

4. Definitions

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunity is a principle that emphasizes that opportunities in employment, education and other areas are available to all. Equal Opportunities in particular relates to a Legal Framework, which makes it illegal to discriminate against people because of a protected characteristic they have.

Diversity

Diversity is a broader concept that builds upon the progress made through equal opportunities. Everyone is different and diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing the differences we each bring to work.

Equal opportunities and diversity work together by identifying and addressing any inequalities and barriers faced by people and by valuing, learning and benefiting from the diverse cultures in society and our staff.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic they have.

Discrimination by association

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess the protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied universally, but its effects disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is uninvited and unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic and makes a person feel intimidated or humiliated.

Victimisation

Victimisation is where someone is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence relating to a complaint.

5. Responsibilities

It is essential that all members of The Bigfoot Group behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to act in a non-discriminatory manner at all times. This includes promoting good relationships between different groups of staff and ensuring equality of opportunity.

6. Application of the Policy

Recruitment and Selection

- Recruitment advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community reflecting The Bigfoot Group commitment to diversity and equality;

- Recruitment advertising will appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best job seekers
- Job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment advertisements will be written on the basis of the essential and justifiable requirements of the positions;
- Shortlisting, appointment and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable and will be supported by written comments.

Grading and Promotion

- All grading will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities and facilities.

Performance Management

- Probation and performance management procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly across all staff.

Discipline and Grievance

- Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff.
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

7. Advice and Complaints

All staff who believes they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment have the right to seek redress.

Staff may seek advice from their supervisor. Complaints should be submitted in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

Verbal or physical abuse by anybody will not be tolerated. The Bigfoot Group may discipline staff who are found to be abusive.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains in line with legislation and the organisations principles.