

Equal Opportunities & Diversity

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-23 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

An equal opportunities and diversity policy is your organisation's written commitment that recruitment, pay, training, promotion, and every other employment decision are made on merit — never because of age, disability, sex, race, or any other protected characteristic. It tells staff what the standard is and tells managers how to meet it.

Discrimination rarely announces itself. It hides in habits: who gets offered the overtime, who gets interviewed, whose flexible working request is taken seriously. A written policy that is actually trained in is the employer's main tool for preventing it — and the first document asked for when a complaint or claim arrives.

This template covers the nine protected characteristics, the behaviours the Equality Act 2010 prohibits, who is responsible for what, how recruitment and everyday decisions are kept fair, and how complaints are handled.

Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all employees, workers, contractors, and job applicants of [Your company], and to every employment decision: recruitment, pay, hours, training, appraisal, promotion, discipline, redundancy selection, and dismissal.

It covers conduct in the workplace and in any setting connected to work — client sites, work socials, training events, and online channels used for work.

Policy statement

[Your company] makes employment decisions on merit, skills, and performance. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation because of any protected characteristic, whether by managers, colleagues, or third parties we can influence.

We aim for a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and a culture where differences are an asset, not a risk to be managed.

What the law prohibits

- Direct discrimination — treating someone worse than others because of a protected characteristic, for example rejecting an applicant because of their age.
- Indirect discrimination — a rule or practice applied to everyone that puts people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified, for example an unnecessary requirement to work every evening.
- Harassment — unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- Victimisation — treating someone badly because they raised, supported, or gave evidence about a discrimination complaint.

- Failure to make reasonable adjustments — not taking reasonable steps to remove a substantial disadvantage faced by a disabled worker or applicant.

Responsibilities

- [Name/role] owns this policy, keeps it current, and reports on it to [owner/board] [frequency].
- Managers apply the policy in every decision they make, challenge unacceptable behaviour when they see it, and never wait for a formal complaint to act.
- Every member of staff treats colleagues, candidates, customers, and suppliers with respect and reports behaviour that falls short.

Recruitment and selection

- Write job adverts and person specifications around the genuine requirements of the role, avoiding wording that signals a preferred age, sex, or background.
- Advertise through channels that reach a broad pool, not only word of mouth. [List your standard channels.]
- Assess every candidate against the same published criteria, using the same core interview questions, and record the reasons for decisions.
- Do not ask about health or disability before making a job offer, except for the narrow purposes the Equality Act 2010 allows, such as establishing whether adjustments are needed for the interview itself.
- Offer reasonable adjustments at every stage of the process — application format, interview timing, premises access.

During employment

Pay, hours, training opportunities, promotion, and workload are allocated on consistent, recorded criteria. Flexible working requests are considered seriously and consistently whatever the reason for asking. Requests for reasonable adjustments go to [name/role]; we discuss options with the individual, act on medical or specialist advice where needed, and record what was agreed and when it will be reviewed.

Dress codes, shift patterns, and social events are checked so they do not disadvantage any group without a genuine business justification — and are adjusted where they do.

Complaints

Anyone who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, or victimisation should raise it — informally with their manager, through the grievance procedure, or under the bullying and harassment policy where that fits better. Complaints are investigated promptly and confidentially, and proven breaches of this policy are dealt with under the disciplinary procedure, up to and including dismissal for serious cases.

No one suffers a detriment for raising a genuine concern, even if it is not upheld.

Training, monitoring, and review

Every new starter covers this policy at induction, and all staff receive refresher training [frequency].

Managers involved in recruitment receive additional training before they interview. Any diversity monitoring data is collected voluntarily, anonymised where possible, and handled in line with our data protection policy.

This policy is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] by [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Fill in the named owner and complaint routes first — a policy nobody owns is a poster, not a control.
2. Check your current job advert templates and interview question sets against the recruitment section before you next hire.
3. Walk through your last three significant people decisions (hire, promotion, dismissal) and ask whether recorded criteria would defend each one.
4. Train managers on the definitions section using real scenarios from your industry, not abstract ones.
5. Cross-reference the grievance and bullying and harassment policies so complaints have one obvious route in.

Official guidance

- › [GOV.UK — Discrimination: your rights](#)
- › [ACAS — Discrimination and the law](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/equal-opportunities-policy> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.