

Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

Scope

Accessrite are fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation.

Accessrite will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (protected characteristics) or any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions, or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with Accessrite disciplinary policy.

The policy is applicable to all employees whether permanent or temporary. The policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with customers and clients.

The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the law, demographics, and internal business requirements.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers, and agency workers

Forms of Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, or visitors. This applies in the work workplace, outside the workplace (e.g. when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts) and on work related trips or events, including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- a) Direct discrimination: occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an

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applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

b) Indirect discrimination: occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

c) Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to any of the protected characteristics. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

d) Victimization: retaliation against someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

e) Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Recruitment and Selection

Accessrite aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. Accessrite recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated based on their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. Shortlisting of applicants should be done by more than one person wherever possible.

Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment without the approval of Human Resources (who should first consider whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account).

Accessrite are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

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Staff Training, Promotion and Conditions of Service

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

Termination of Employment

Accessrite will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

Accessrite will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal, or other disciplinary action.

Disability Discrimination

If you are disabled or become disabled, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition so that you can be supported as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. Accessrite will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If it is considered a particular adjustment would not be reasonable the reasons will be explained to you and efforts made to find an alternative solution where possible.

Breaches of This Policy

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. Accessrite take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

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