

# Equal Opportunities Policy

Vested Impact Ltd (the Employer) is committed to equal opportunities.

It is our policy that all employment decisions are based on merit and the legitimate business needs of the organisation the employer does not discriminate on the basis of race colour or nationality ethnic or national origins sex gender reassignment sexual orientation marital or civil partner status pregnancy or maternity disability religion or belief age or any other ground which it is or becomes unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England Wales and Scotland (referred to as protected characteristics)

our intention is to enable all our staff to work in an environment which allows them to fulfil their potential without fear of discrimination harassment or victimisation the employer's commitment to equal opportunities extends to all aspects of the working relationship including.

- recruitment and selection procedures
- terms of employment including pay conditions and benefits.
- training appraisals career development and promotion
- work practises conduct issues allocation of tasks discipline and grievances.
- work related social events and
- termination of employment and matters after termination including references.

The policy is intended to help the employer achieve its diversity and anti-discrimination aims by clarifying the responsibilities and duties of all staff in respect of equal opportunities and discrimination. The employer will promote effective communication and consultation between the employer and staff concerning equal opportunities by means it considers appropriate.

The principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors' clients customers suppliers and former staff members.

This is a statement of policy only and does not form part of your contract of employment. This policy may be amended at any time by the employer in its absolute discretion.

## Who is responsible for equal opportunities?:

Discrimination occurs in different ways, some more obvious than others. Discrimination on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics is prohibited by law, even if unintentional, unless a particular exception applies.

### *Direct discrimination*

Direct discrimination is less favourable treatment because of one of the protected characteristics. Examples would include refusing a woman a job as a chauffeur because you believe that women are not good drivers or restricting recruitment to persons under 40 because you want to have a young and dynamic workforce.

Direct discrimination can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess the Protected Characteristic but is perceived to have it or associate with other people who do. For example, when a person is less favourably treated because they are wrongly believed to be homosexual or because they have a spouse who is Muslim

### *Indirect discrimination*

Indirect discrimination arises when an employer applies an apparently neutral provision criterion or practise which in fact puts individuals with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage statistically and this is unjustified. To show discriminating the individual complaining has to be personally disadvantaged. An example would be a requirement for job candidates to have 10 years experience in a particular role since this will be harder for young people to satisfy. This kind of discrimination is unlawful unless it is proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### *Victimisation*

Victimisation means treating a person less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination or have provided information in connection with a complaint or because they might do one of those things.

#### *Harassment*

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating hostile degrading humiliating or offensive environment to that individual.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature or it may be related to age race colour or nationality ethnic or national origin's sex gender reassignment sexual orientation disability religion or belief pregnancy or maternity.

Harassment can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess A protected characteristic but is perceived to have it for example when a person is per harassed because they have wrongly believed to be homosexual or associates with other people who possess A protected characteristic for example they have a spouse who is Muslim

a person may be subject to harassment even if they were not the intended target for example a person may be harassed by a sexist joke about a different gender if it created an offensive environment for them to work in.

Harassment may include

- use of insults or slurs based on a protected characteristic or of a sexual nature or other verbal abuse or derogatory offensive or stereotyping jokes or remarks
- physical or verbal abuse threatening or intimidating behaviour because of a protected characteristic or behaviour of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome physical contact including touching hugging kissing pinching or patting brushing past invading personal space pushing grabbing or other assaults
- unwelcome requests for sexual acts or favours verbal sexual advances vulgar sexual suggestive or explicit comments or behaviour
- shunning or ostracising someone for example by deliberately excluding them from conversations or activities
- outing or threatening to out someone's sexual orientation IE to make it known
- Racist sexist homophobic or ageist jokes and stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender
- isolation from normal work or study places conversations or social events

#### *Disability discrimination*

this could be direct or indirect discrimination and is unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability

#### *disabled persons*

any staff member who considers that they may have a disability is strongly encouraged to speak with the CEO particularly if they experience difficulties at work because of their disability so that any reasonable adjustments to help overcome or minimize difficulties can be discussed. For these purposes disability includes any physical or mental impairment which substantially affects your ability to perform day-to-day activities and has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months. Disclosure of this information will be treated in confidence if you wish it to be so far as is reasonably practical and we will do our best to handle matters sensitively and to ensure that you are treated with dignity and with respect for your privacy.

We will consult with you about whether adjustments are needed to avoid you being disadvantaged and may ask you to see a doctor appointed by us to advise on this. We will seek to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment unreasonable we will explain why and try to find an alternative solution

#### *Making employment decisions fairly*

As noted above the employer will recruit employees and make other employment decisions concerning promotion training dismissal and related issues on the basis of objective criteria.

Managers should only stipulate criteria or conditions for employment decisions including job selection promotion and redundancy which are based on a legitimate business need and which do not go further than is needed to satisfy that need. If you are in doubt about whether particular criteria or conditions are indirectly discriminatory or justifiable then please speak to the CEO.

The employer is legally required to verify that all employees have the right to work in the UK. Prior to starting employment all employees must produce original documents to the employers satisfaction irrespective of nationality. Information about the documents required is available from the CEO.

### What to do if you encounter discrimination

If you believe that you have been the victim of discrimination you should follow the employers grievance procedure.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to combat discrimination if they encounter it. Staff who observe or are aware of acts that they believe amount to discrimination directed at others are encouraged to report these to the CEO.

Any grievance or report raised about discrimination will be kept confidential so far as this is practicable. We may ask you if you wish your complaints to be put to the alleged discriminator if disciplinary action appears to be appropriate. It sometimes may be necessary to disclose the complaint or take action even if this is not in line with your wishes but we will seek to protect you from victimisation and if you wish we will seek to protect your identity. You should be aware that disciplinary action may be impossible without your cooperation or if you refuse to allow relevant information to be disclosed.

Staff who raise a complaint about or report discrimination in good faith will be protected from retaliation or victimisation. As long as you act in good faith the fact that you have raised a complaint or report will not affect your position within the employer even if the complaint is not upheld. Making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith is a misconduct defence and will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary policy. Any member of staff who attempts acts of retaliation or victimisation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

### Non-compliance with the equal opportunities rules

Any breach of equal opportunities rules or failure to comply with this policy will be taken very seriously and is likely to result in disciplinary action against the offender up to and including immediate dismissal.

Staff should also note that in some cases they may be personally liable for their acts of discrimination and that legal action may be taken against them directly by the victim of any discrimination and it may be a criminal offence intentionally to harass another employee.

### Review of this policy

The board of directors of the employer will keep this policy under review and accountability will lie with the CEO. The employer encourages staff to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved or ask any questions if they're unsure about any part of this policy or how it is applied by contacting the CEO.



Kimberley Abbott

Chief Executive Officer