

1. Introduction

PBS Utility Services Ltd (PBS) is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, racism, and victimisation, where all employees are treated equally with dignity and respect. All job applicants, employees and others who work for the Company will be treated fairly with equal opportunity for all. PBS are striving to ensure that the work environment is free of any unfair treatments.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) the Company. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which employees should treat each other, visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, and any other persons associated with the functions of PBS.

This policy relates to all aspects of employment including individual standards of behaviour, the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance development, pay, promotion and transfers, provision of benefits, and leaving the organisation.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

'Equality' means treating all people equal regardless of personal characteristics.

'Diversity' means recognising, valuing, and using the differences which people have.

'Direct Discrimination' means treating a person less favourably because of a particular characteristic covered by discrimination legislation.

'Indirect Discrimination' means applying criteria or practice equally to all people, but which has the effect of disadvantaging a group of people covered by discrimination legislation and has a detrimental impact on an individual.


'Harassment' means unwanted conduct, real or perceived, that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.

'Bullying' means unwanted conduct, real or perceived, that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.

'Victimisation' means treating a person less favourably because they have, or intend to, make a complaint or allegation, or has given evidence in relation to a complaint.

'Protected Characteristics' means age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, and civil partnership in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour, or nationality), religion or belief (this includes lack of belief) sex, sexual orientation.

'Associative Discrimination' means treating a person less favourably because of their association with a person(s) who has a particular characteristic covered by discrimination legislation.

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‘Perceptive Discrimination’ means treating a person less favourably based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic covered by discrimination legislation.

‘Third Party Harassment’ means occurs where an employee is harassed (and the harassment relates to a protected characteristic) by third parties such as customers and clients.

‘Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments’ means where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer fails to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to overcome the disadvantage.

‘Inclusion’ means a sense of belonging, feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of support and commitment so that you can do your best.

4. Principles

The Equality Act 2010 defines the following as ‘Protected Characteristics’:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

PBS is committed to and strives to ensure that every individual who works for the Company, or who applies to work for it (providing that they have a Legal Right to Work in the UK), will be treated fairly and equally valued regardless of their protected characteristics or other circumstances, including social and employment status, HIV status, or trade union/non-trade union membership. We aim to create an inclusive working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where employees feel involved, respected, and connected to our success.

PBS will not discriminate unlawfully against customers, or clients using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the Company.

The Directors and Senior Management Team recognise the value of equality, diversity, and an inclusive working environment. They will work for the aims of this policy, best practice, equality, and legislation to deliver a positive and fair working environment for all staff.

PBS will encourage the organisations within which it operates to work in the spirit of this policy. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with appropriately and may lead to legal and / or disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

5. Policy Framework

5.1. General

PBS expect all employees to comply with the contents of this policy and to also familiarise themselves with the following documents located in 'Company Policies, Procedures & Staff Forms':


- HR-PR-001 Right to Work in the UK Procedure
- HR-PR-002 Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure
- HR-POL-005 Eligibility to Work in the UK Policy
- HR-POL-006 Employee Standards Policy
- HR-POL-009 Modern Slavery Policy
- HR-POL-011 Recruitment & Selection Policy
- HR-POL-012 Data Protection Policy
- HR-POL-014 Training and Development Policy
- HR-POL-019 Whistle Blowing Policy
- HR-POL-021 Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy
- HR-POL-023 Flexible Working Policy
- HR-POL-024 Bullying & Harassment Policy
- IS-POL-003 DPA Legal Requirements Policy

The **impact** of any behaviour, NOT the intent, is the important element in allegations of breaches of the Equality and Diversity policy and legislation. It is no defence for employees to say that they did not intend their behaviour to cause offence, or to blame the recipient for being over-sensitive. The value of equality and diversity will be covered in all Company Induction sessions.

5.2. Policy Implementation

To implement this policy, we will:

- Avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy.
- Appoint, train, develop and promote based on merit and ability to do the job.
- Communicate the policy to employees upon Induction to the Company.
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as sub-contractors or agencies, that they too will comply with this policy in their dealings with our Company and our workforce.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion are fully aware of the content of this policy.
- Provide guidance for those engaged to work at the Company to help them understand their Rights and Responsibilities under this policy, and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.
- Provide training to Managers as may be appropriate to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.
- Make reasonable adjustments for employees with any disability, where it is reasonable and possible to do so, to ensure that they do not suffer a disadvantage in the workplace.
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications when required by legislation or for best practice purposes.
- Through the board meetings, monitor the ethnic, race, gender, and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities

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within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified.

- Review policy effectiveness once per annum (minimum) and act where necessary.

5.3. Legal Obligations

There is legislation in place which protects individuals against direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment (including bullying) and victimisation because of their protected characteristic or other circumstances, including social and employment status, HIV status, or trade union/non-trade union membership. The principles which underpin such legislation are extended to all employees regardless of any personal characteristic.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Company, for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Directors/Managers

All Directors/Managers should:

- Lead by example by promoting equality of opportunity, diversity, and challenging discriminatory conduct.
- Ensure this policy is implemented.
- Expect their staff to do their best to promote equality of opportunity and diversity.
- Ensure that staff are aware of this policy, and should they become witness to, or aware of any breach of this policy, they must report it immediately to the HR Department.
- Identify and highlight any examples of actual or potential unjustifiable discrimination within the limitations of legislation to the HR department.
- Deal with breaches to this policy promptly, sensitively, and confidentially.

6.2. The HR Department

The HR Department will:

- Be responsible for reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.
- Provide advice and guidance to Directors, Managers, and employees.
- Ensure that all complaints and alleged breaches of this policy are dealt with seriously, sensitively, confidentially, and in a timely manner.

6.3. Employees

All employees have responsibility for adhering to and practicing this policy, and should:

- Co-operate and comply with the policy to ensure equality of opportunity and diversity.
- Not discriminate in the course of their duties nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so.
- Not victimise, harass, or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristic or other circumstances, such as social and employment status, HIV status, or trade union/non-trade union membership.
- Inform their Line Manager or HR Department if they suspect that discrimination is taking place.
- Co-operate fully with any investigation into a complaint under this policy.

7. Complaints

Any individual who believes that an act in breach of this policy has taken place should raise the issue as soon as possible with the individual concerned, their Line Manager, or HR Department.

If the complaint is against an individual's Line Manager, the individual should raise the issue as soon as possible with their Line Manager's Manager, the HSEQ Manager, or with the HR Department.

All complaints will be dealt with seriously in line with the Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure, and PBS will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. If a complaint involves bullying or harassment, the Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure is reviewed / modified. Where complaints are upheld against employees this may lead to legal and / or disciplinary action and may result in dismissal without notice.

You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Any queries or concerns about the application of this policy should be referred to the HSEQ Manager or HR Department.