

Last reviewed: March 2022

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## **Purpose**

At Integrity Action, we believe that everyone should be able to work in an environment in which they feel safe and can thrive. We are committed to providing a non-threatening, non-oppressive environment for all staff, trustees, partners and people we work with, where everybody is treated fairly, impartially, without bias, with dignity and respect, and where no one is unfairly discriminated against.

As members of Integrity Action's team, we are all expected to contribute to building a working environment where everybody feels they belong as they are, where diversity is celebrated and where barriers to inclusion and equality are removed.

## **Application**

This policy and related procedures apply to all staff members, volunteers, trustees, partners, and consultants.

Integrity Action will assess how this policy, and any supporting practices are working, reviewing them regularly and considering and taking action to address any issues.

## **Ownership**

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility for upholding this policy and its underpinning values.

The responsibility for introduction (including training), consistent application and on-going implementation of this policy and related procedures lies with the Head of Operations.

## **Definitions**

**Diversity:** People, whilst similar in many ways, are also different. Such differences include gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief, education, economic status, personality, communication style and approaches to how people think and work, amongst other things. If not effectively understood and valued, these differences can significantly impact access and opportunities. Understanding, valuing and effectively managing diversity can result in greater participation with benefits at an individual, team, organisational and wider societal level.

**Inclusion** is an intentional and proactive process that aims to create conditions for all people to fully contribute to our work. It is about making people feel welcome and accepted, especially those that are socially excluded, marginalised or under-represented. It is about encouraging participation so that everyone feels valued, respected and involved thereby fostering a sense of belonging. It strengthens relations and supports trust between people

**Equality** seeks to eradicate unjustified discrimination on irrelevant grounds and promote social justice. It means treating people fairly, impartially and without bias. Equality doesn't mean treating everyone the same. Rather it means treating people equitably, which involves acknowledging and trying to redress imbalances through a differentiated approach, where necessary and appropriate.

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**Belonging** is the unique experience that each employee feels relating to their liking, connection with and understanding of the organisation, culture and team. Belonging is driven by a feeling of positive regard, acceptance and social connectivity. It gives meaning and purpose to the work staff do, underpinning motivation and effort. A sense of belonging supports physical and psychological health and is therefore fundamental to positive wellbeing and performance.

### **Guiding principles**

Integrity Action will place understanding, rapport-building, and connection first to ensure that our people feel in communion with each other.

Integrity Action's is committed to remove any discrimination on any grounds including age, disability, gender including transgender and intersex, marital status including civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, colour, HIV status, nationality, ethnic or national origin or community background, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, having or not having dependents, work patterns, or on any other irrelevant grounds in recruitment, promotion, training or transfer, terms and conditions of service, discipline or dismissal. Harassment of any nature will not be accepted.

In addition, we want to ensure that we develop our awareness of the differing ways in which discrimination can be compounded when different characteristics (such as ethnicity and gender, or disability and age) intersect.

All eligible people have equality of opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their suitability for the work.

Unjustified discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is a barrier to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights. Unjustified discrimination is where decisions are made (whether consciously or not) that favour certain groups or individuals and therefore disadvantage others, because of particular characteristics they have no control over. Unjustified discrimination is unacceptable on all the grounds identified within this policy.

We uphold positive discrimination (which means favourable treatment based on specific characteristic) as unlawful within the UK, while balancing the need to encourage and promote equity for groups who are underrepresented, for example, by specifically encouraging underrepresented groups to apply for job opportunities.

If you as a staff member have any concerns about the adherence to the equal opportunities policy – the guiding principle is always do something – share your concerns with the CEO immediately (or Board if a satisfactory response is not received) – and then take the appropriate action recommended.

There is a defined procedure in place for reporting allegations of non-adherence and serious concerns. Refer to the Grievance policy, Whistleblowing policy, and Safeguarding policy for more information.

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## **Recruitment**

The principal objective of any selection process is to advance Integrity Action's best interests by selecting the best person for the position in a fair, transparent, and efficient process. Selection criteria for all positions will therefore be clearly defined in the job description which will also include details of Integrity Action's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Integrity Action is committed to fair and just recruitment. Equality is an important part of our recruitment and selection policies and processes. Throughout all aspects of our recruitment and selection process we should reflect the need to promote equality, encourage diversity and strive for greater inclusion. This may include, for example, relying less on CVs and interviews alone and more on task completion, and using an inclusive language during the recruitment process. Job advertisements must not indicate or appear to indicate an intention to unjustifiably discriminate. This means, for example, thinking very carefully before applying specific criteria, experience and qualifications, restricting flexible working, defining personality type or communication style.

Given we want to encourage diverse applicants, we must not confine our advertising to areas, publications or sites which would undermine this or unjustifiably exclude groups or disproportionately reduce our pool.

No job applicant will receive less favourable treatment in recruitment on grounds which are not relevant to good employment practice.

Integrity Action staff members participating in recruitment processes are responsible and accountable to ensure full compliance with the administrative recruitment procedures as well as this policy, so that all new recruitments are conducted in an equitable, transparent, and fair manner, with no bias. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of shortlisted job applicants to attend interviews, perform tests, and demonstrate their full potential.

CEO must approve all recruitment prior to the role being advertised. This includes job description, salary and method of advertising. Before offering a position, we will obtain at least two satisfactory references for new starters and a basic level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (<https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>).

If an existing member of staff applies for a role and they meet the essential criteria they will automatically be offered an interview.

## **Leaving employees**

*Providing references.* Staff may provide references in a personal capacity but must make it clear that this is the case. If references are provided in the capacity of Integrity Action they must be reviewed by a member of the Senior Management Team (in addition to the person writing the reference).



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*Exit interviews.* It is good practice for an exit interview to be carried out with any staff who leave the organisation. This should be performed by someone other than the leaver's line manager. The outcome should be reported to the management team.

*Notice periods.* Staff may negotiate a shorter notice period in some circumstances if the needs of the charity are not adversely affected.

### **Working environment**

Integrity Action is committed to creating a working environment that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promotes dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and celebrated.

This commitment includes providing formal and informal opportunities for staff to learn about diversity, inclusion, discrimination and about their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide a supportive working environment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. Any staff is welcome to contribute with ideas and suggestions on improving this policy and the organisation's practices around diversity, inclusion, equality and belonging.

All staff should understand that they can be personally held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, partners, the public.

### **Performance Management**

Performance management and evaluation, as well as related development, including succession planning, career breaks, secondments and other opportunities, should be based solely on evidence. It should not be based on stereotypes or assumptions or affinity bias. For example, evaluation related to women's mobility or length of future service, or the suitability of people of particular ethnic origins to undertake specific jobs is inappropriate.

### **Equality and Pay**

We have a commitment to a pay system that is transparent and based on objective criteria, free from gender, racial, and other unjustified bias. We will regularly undertake equal pay audits and related equality pay gap assessments with an intersectional dimension and comply with any required external reporting.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious and/or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, that undermines, humiliates, or injures the recipient.



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Harassment, in general, is unwanted conduct affecting someone's dignity. It can be related to age, disability, ethnicity / race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may involve persistent incidents or an isolated one. The crucial aspect is that the actions or comments are deemed to be demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient and create a hostile environment.

Bullying and harassment can manifest in a variety of ways, including by one member of staff to another of a different or equivalent level/pay band, or by one group of staff to an individual member of staff, or an external contact. If bullying or harassment involves issues of gender including transgender and intersex, sexual orientation, marital - including civil partnership - status, caring responsibility, race / ethnicity, religion / belief, political belief, age or disability, relevant legislation may apply.

Bullying and harassment are about misuse of power and should not be a part of our working culture or practices. There can sometimes be a tendency for incidents of bullying and/or harassment to be 'swept under the carpet' which means they are ignored and not treated seriously as they should be. This is counter to the organisational culture we aspire to and all staff are encouraged to speak up using relevant procedures.

All employees must avoid and prevent discrimination, harassment or intimidation of other employees on any grounds, and support a dignifying and respectful work environment.

Disciplinary action for misconduct will be taken against any employee who breaches this policy, and serious or repeated breaches may result in dismissal. Please read the Grievance Policy for further information.

### **Grievances and Concerns**

Any employee who feels that the treatment they, or other staff, have received is not in keeping with this policy has a right to raise this under the Grievance Policy and Whistleblowing Policy. Employees must not be intimidated, discriminated against or treated differently for raising a concern, complaining or assisting in an investigation. If this happens it could amount to victimisation which may be unlawful within the terms of the relevant legislation and goes against this and other related policies and their application.

### **Support tools**

- [Integrity Action's Gender and Social Justice Approach](#)
- [UK Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Equality Advisory Support Service discrimination helpline](#)
- [List of organisation that can help if you are a victim of hate crime](#)