

Equality & Diversity Policy

Adapt (NE) is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and / or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and / or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation

- decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found within the Staff Handbook. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance and / or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Rights under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and / or victimisation.

This information is here to help you understand when people have been treated unlawfully.

Who is protected by the Equality Act?

Everyone in Britain is protected. This is because the Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have. Under the Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

There are some important differences depending on which protected characteristics people have.

Situations in which people are protected from discrimination

Under the Equality Act people are protected from discrimination:

- In the workplace.
- When using public services like health care (e.g. visiting the GP or local hospital) or education (e.g. the school or college).
- When using businesses and other organisations that provide services and goods (like shops, restaurants, and cinemas).
- When using transport.
- When joining a club or association (e.g. a local tennis club); and
- When having contact with public bodies like the local council or government departments.

How can people be discriminated against?

There are **four** main types of discrimination.

1. Direct Discrimination

This means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people's memories get worse as they get older so doesn't tell one of his older employees about it, because he thinks the employee wouldn't be able to do the job.

2. Indirect Discrimination

This can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example a local authority is planning to redevelop some of its housing. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the resident parents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of childcare responsibilities.

3. Harassment

This means people cannot be treated in a way that violates their dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. For example a person with Down's Syndrome is visiting a pub with friends. The bar staff make derogatory and offensive comments about them, which upsets and offends them.

4. Victimisation

This means people cannot be treated unfairly if they are taking action under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination), or if they are supporting someone else who is doing so. For example, an employee makes a complaint of sexual harassment at work and is dismissed as a consequence.

What else does the Equality Act do?

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Act also requires public bodies (like local councils, hospitals, and publicly-funded service providers) to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics. The public body also should have evidence to show how it has done this.

- For example, a local authority wants to improve its local bus service. It carries out a survey of people who use public transport and finds that very few women use buses at night because they are worried about sexual harassment. The local authority decides to work with the police and the transport provider, as well as local residents, to find ways to address this problem and make the bus service more inclusive.

Where else can I find information?

You can also access advice from [Citizens Advice](#).

If you are concerned about your treatment at work, you can visit [ACAS](#) for more information.

If you are in a union, your union rep should also be able to help you with discrimination advice.