

iQuda equality & diversity policy

1. Aims of this policy

iQuda Ltd recognises and values people's differences and will assist them to use their talents to reach their full potential.

The organisation will do all it can to ensure it recruits, trains and promotes people based on qualifications, experience and abilities for all roles within the organisation.

This policy is designed to ensure that iQuda Ltd complies with its obligations under equality legislation and demonstrates our commitment to treating people equally and fairly.

iQuda Ltd is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (defined as Protected Characteristics).

Using fair and objective employment practices, the organisation aims to ensure that

- All employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.
- All employees have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour. Such behaviour may come from other employees or by people (third parties) who are not employees of iQuda Ltd, such as customers or clients.
- All employees have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair discrimination.
- All employees have the right to be free from discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic or because others perceive that they have a particular Protected Characteristic, even if they do not.

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

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

2. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all staff, managers, owners, volunteers, apprentices, third parties and other permanent and nonpermanent staff working for or on behalf of iQuda Ltd. It also

applies to all job applications, students on work experience placement and volunteers. All individuals who iQuda comes into contact with deserve to be treated in line with this policy.

The policy applies to all stages of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion and training.

People also must not be discriminated against because they are on a part time or fixed term contract

3. Definitions

Direct discrimination is when an employee or applicant is treated less favourably than someone else because of their:

- sex
- marriage or civil partnership
- social or economic class
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity leave
- sexual orientation
- disability
- race
- religion or belief, or non-belief
- age

and that there is no genuine occupation requirement for it.

Indirect discrimination

This is where there is a working condition, practice or rule that disadvantages one group of people more than another. In other words it is more difficult for people from one group to comply with the requirement. Even if it is done accidentally indirect discrimination is unlawful. Indirect discrimination is only allowed if it is necessary for the way the business works, and there is no other way of achieving it.

Discrimination arising from disability

This is where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability where it cannot be objectively justified. This only applies where the organisation knew or could reasonably be expected to know that the person was disabled.

Associative Discrimination

This is where someone is treated worse than someone else because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination

This is where someone is treated worse than someone else because there has been an incorrect assumption that they have a protected characteristic. This applies even if the person does not possess the characteristic.

Third Party Harassment

This is where an employee is harassed by a third party who is not an employee eg volunteers or service users. The organisation becomes liable if it has happened on at least two occasions, that it is aware that it took place and have not taken steps to prevent it happening again.

4. Policy Statement

As an organisation, we value the variety of different views, outlooks and approaches that a diverse workforce bring. This assists us to provide improved services and increase our understanding of our service users/clients.

We will do all we can to ensure no one will receive less favourable treatment or is to be disadvantaged by requirements or conditions, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

5. Responsibilities

Employees and volunteers of iQuda have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed and to draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Responsibility for promoting awareness of this policy and monitoring that it is being followed rests with Managers (Vincent de Beer, James Watson) and Anthony Jones.

Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy by employees

Breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with under iQuda disciplinary proceedings, up to and including termination of employment.

Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy by volunteers

Employees, volunteers and trustees are also personally liable under equality legislation for any act of unlawful discrimination.

6. Equality and Diversity in Practice

In carrying out the policy, the organisation will carry out the following actions:

- Use of selection criteria that does not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and promotion procedures

- Requiring entry to employment /volunteering or progression within it to be based on merit
- Not discriminating in opportunities for recruitment, training, promotion or transfer of employees or volunteers
- Ensuring that every individual is assessed according to his or her personal capability to carry out a given job/role
- Ensure that all employees are given equal treatment with regard to terms and conditions of employment, provided they do the same or broadly similar work, or work of equal value
- Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the operation of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Ensure that all relevant requirements of the Equality Act in relation to disability are met and adhered to. This will include making reasonable adjustments to ensure access to employment or volunteering tasks and opportunities.
- Ensure that any amendments to any legislation relating to discrimination are met and adhered to.

7. Implementation of the policy

All staff, trustees and volunteers will be involved in creating an equality environment and one that values diversity.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication of the policy to job applicants and employees/ volunteers will be carried out by the person carrying out the initial interview. This is usually Stephen Macintosh or Anthony Jones. Garth Macintosh is responsible for external communications with regards to this policy.

Methods of **communicating** the policy could include:

- Making available a copy of the policy to prospective applicants
- Ensuring all new starters have the opportunity to discuss the policy with line managers/ colleagues
- Making use of team meetings to discuss the policy and defining areas where practice could be improved
- Providing non- discrimination selection training for managers who are recruiting
- Providing Equality and Diversity training and guidance to staff and volunteers (including trustees)
- Including reference to abiding by the policy in staff terms and conditions/ volunteer agreements
- Incorporating specific responsibilities into job/role descriptions

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

In selecting our partners we will consider their commitment to Equality and Diversity by:

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- Asking to see their policy
- Asking what they do in practice, including monitoring the policy

USERS OF OUR SERVICE

We will make our services accessible by: promoting them appropriately through standard channels.

MONITORING THE POLICY

This policy will be monitored to judge to what extent it is working and identify areas for improvement.

Monitoring will relate to both employees/ volunteers and to service users and methods used will include:

- Compliance spot checks
- Incident reports
- Consulting with other staff members to see if they believe that this policy is being adhered to
- Auditing the policy itself

8. Reporting discrimination/potential discrimination

Employees who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue by completing a QIRF iQuda Incident Report form and handing this to an appropriate manager. You may also raise the issue in person, in writing or over the phone if you feel comfortable doing so. If you are not comfortable discussing this with your manager, you may speak to another senior member of staff confidentially who will take appropriate action.

Service users who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should follow the Q218 iQuda Complaints Policy Procedure.

Employees/volunteers/temporary staff/third parties should also use this approach if they feel that they been the subject of harassment from someone who is not an employee of iQuda Ltd. iQuda Ltd will not tolerate any harassment from third parties towards its employees employees and will take appropriate action to prevent it happening again.

If an employee/volunteer/third party witnesses behaviour that they find offensive in relation to age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, even if it is not directed at them they should also use this procedure.

9. Enforcement

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This policy will be enforced by the Executive Team and Data Protection Officer. Violations may result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension, or more severe penalties up to and including termination of employment. iQuda reserves the right to report any illegal action by its employees, clients or other stakeholders to applicable authorities.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. The policy will be reviewed before this timeframe if the relevant supervisory authority releases new legislation or guidance.

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