

EQUALITY

POLICY

Document Control

Document developed by:	HR
Date:	July 2022
Approved by:	Dave Benstead on behalf of the board
Date	July 2022
For further information:	Chief Executive Officer
Review date:	July 2023

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all staff, learners, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and job applicants are aware of Mahdlo's Equality Policy.

Mahdlo recognises its responsibilities to ensure the fair and equal treatment of everyone employed and those individuals who undertake work on Youth Zone premises.

All staff, learners and volunteers are made aware of policies and procedures on induction and where to access them.

We are committed to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and encouraging diversity amongst our employees and volunteers. Our objective is to create a working environment in which there is no unlawful discrimination and all decisions are based on merit, and a workforce that is representative of the communities from which it is drawn.

All employment related policies are applied impartially and objectively and are designed to promote equal opportunity and protection against discrimination.

This policy has the full support of our Board of Directors.

1.1 Policy

This policy sets out the principles under which we will operate to meet these aims and includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community.

This policy does not give contractual rights to individual employees. Mahdlo reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time although we will notify you in writing of any changes.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, learners, agency workers, contractors and job applicants.

1.2 What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unlawful when it takes place on one of the following grounds (the 'protected characteristics') as detailed in the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- gender re-assignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief (including lack of religion/belief)
- gender
- sexual orientation

Discrimination can take a number of forms:

- Direct discrimination is when someone is treated negatively/less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, it would be direct discrimination if a manager excludes an employee from a training course just because she is pregnant.

- It is also direct discrimination when someone is treated negatively/less favourably because they associate with someone with a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic. For example, it would be direct discrimination if an employee ostracised a colleague because the colleague has a gay flatmate or because he thinks the colleague is gay.
- Indirect discrimination is when an apparently neutral practice or requirement disproportionately disadvantages one group and cannot be justified by the needs of the business. For example, imposing a requirement that job applicants must speak fluent English disproportionately disadvantages non-English groups and would be unlawful unless it could be justified on genuine business grounds.
- It is also discrimination when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability and this cannot be justified by the needs of the business or when the business fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person.

1.3 Our responsibilities and approach

We aim to avoid discrimination in all aspects of employment and recruitment. Our approach to different aspects of employment and recruitment is set out below.

1.4 Your rights and responsibilities

You have the right not to experience unlawful discrimination in our workplace. You also have a responsibility to understand this policy and help us to implement it.

All employees, volunteers, learners, agency workers and contractors have a duty not to discriminate against each other and not to help anyone else do so.

1.5 Our relationships with visitors to Mahdlo

You must not discriminate against any of our visitors. Equally, we expect our visitors not to discriminate against you and we will take appropriate action against any visitor found to have done so.

1.6 Training on equalities

We will train those responsible for recruitment on understanding and avoiding discrimination. Equality underpins all training within Mahdlo.

1.7 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance

All learning and development opportunities will be subject to moderation and quality assurance processes, supported by Awarding Bodies.

2.0 RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Recruitment and Selection

We aim to ensure that job requirements and recruitment criteria are clear and based only on what is required to get the job done effectively. We will avoid making stereotypical assumptions based on protected characteristics about who is able to do a particular job.

We aim to ensure that no applicant is placed at a disadvantage by practices or requirements which are not justified by the demands of the job.

For all jobs, we will draw up a clear and accurate job description and person specification to ensure that we remain focussed on what the job involves and the skills, experience and qualifications which are relevant and necessary to do the job. If a job can be done flexibly, we aim to say so in the job description. Shortlisting for interview will be carried out by more than one senior member of staff and applied fairly and consistently to all applicants. If we hold interviews, we will try to ensure that more than one person conducts them to ensure that we avoid unintentional bias.

We will not ask for personal or irrelevant information on application forms or in interviews. We will focus instead on whether someone has the relevant skills, qualities and experience to do the job.

2.2 Promotion, training and appraisals

Promotion and training decisions will be made on the basis of merit. We will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee in making promotion or training decisions. We believe all employees should have an equal opportunity to progress and develop.

We will advertise promotion and transfer opportunities widely, including deputising opportunities and secondments which could lead to permanent promotion. We will try to ensure that training and development opportunities are made known to all relevant employees.

Training needs will be identified through regular reviews/training needs analysis/appraisal discussions.

We have a formal appraisal system which helps us to ensure that employees are being assessed fairly on the basis of job performance and are not being discriminated against. We will conduct appraisals objectively and measure performance in a transparent and objective way, without prejudice or bias.

2.3 Positive action

For some recruitment and promotion exercises we may take positive action to address under-representation in our workforce by encouraging applications from people from certain under-represented groups. For example, we may state on advertisements that we particularly welcome applications from certain groups, we may target our advertising towards particular groups, we might hold open days, work shadowing opportunities targeted at particular groups or we might provide training for particular groups to prepare them for promotion. However, we will ultimately make recruitment and promotion decisions on merit and not on the basis of protected characteristics.

3.0 WORKING CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

We will try to accommodate cultural or religious practices such as prayer requirements where we reasonably can. We will not discriminate directly or indirectly when dealing with requests for time off for religious and belief observance. However, employees need to be aware that the law does not confer an automatic right for employees to have time off, or to be provided with facilities to undertake religious observance.

We aim to ensure that our terms of employment, benefits, facilities and policies are free from unlawful discrimination. We will review our benefits and facilities regularly to ensure that they are available to all who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

We will where reasonably practicable, in line with the Equality Act 2010, strive to accommodate reasonable adjustments to working conditions, the working environment, recruitment processes and terms and conditions of employment to help overcome practical difficulties created by a particular disability.

We will not treat any employee unfairly, based on their membership of a trade union.

We will ensure that decisions made under our disciplinary, grievance, performance improvement and attendance management policies are carried out fairly and without discrimination.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

3.1 Termination of employment

We will ensure that we avoid discrimination in making decisions about dismissal or redundancy.

Where possible we will ensure that any manager's decision to dismiss an employee is endorsed by another manager and the Chief Executive. We will encourage leavers to give feedback about their employment in exit interviews.

3.2 Disabled employees

We will make adjustments to accommodate disabled employees where possible and reasonable. For example, we can provide extra equipment or support, we can re-arrange duties and we can make changes to our premises in appropriate cases. If you think you may have a disability, you are encouraged to tell us about this so that we can explore what adjustments might be appropriate.

4.0 MONITORING

We may ask job applicants, learners, members, volunteers and employees for information about some of their protected characteristics. We do this to help us to:

- establish whether our equality policy is effective in practice;
- analyse the effect of other policies and practices on different groups;
- highlight possible inequalities and where appropriate investigate their underlying causes; and
- take action where we think it is needed to address problems or reduce disparities.

We collect this information anonymously and we will use it only for monitoring purposes and not for any other purpose. We will protect the confidentiality of the information given to us.

Some examples of the type of monitoring we may carry out are as follows:

- how many people with particular characteristics apply for each job, are shortlisted and recruited;
- how many people in the workforce have a particular protected characteristic and the levels within the organisation that they are employed at, their length of service and their resignation rates and patterns;
- the protected characteristics of staff attending training;
- the satisfaction levels of staff with a particular protected characteristic;
- the protected characteristics of employees using the grievance or bullying and harassment procedures; and
- the protected characteristics of employees who are disciplined or dismissed.

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 What to do if you have been discriminated against

If you believe you may have been discriminated against, please tell us. You can speak informally with your manager or the HR and Business Support Coordinator. If you want to make a more formal complaint, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our **Grievance Procedure**. If you believe there has been any bullying or harassment then you should raise the matter through our **Dignity at Work: Anti-bullying, harassment and victimisation procedure**.

Allegations of potential breaches of this policy will be treated seriously. Employees, learners, volunteers and contractors who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

5.2 What will happen if you act in a discriminatory way?

If, after investigation, we decide that you have acted in breach of this policy you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This applies to all.

6.0 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Dignity at Work: Anti-bullying, harassment and victimisation policy
- Grievance procedure
- Disciplinary procedure
- Attendance management policy

All policy/guideline documents can be accessed via the Management/Policies folder on all Mahdlo computer hard drives, as a hard copy in the Policies folder in the staff area and can be emailed if requested.