

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

INTRODUCTION

At MQ, we recognise that both the people who work for us, and those who apply to work for us, are individuals with different opinions, backgrounds, cultures, lifestyles, and circumstances.

We respect these differences and we are fully committed to the principles of diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion (see Appendix 1 for definitions)

This policy applies to all staff, by which we mean all employees, volunteers, Trustees agency staff and anyone who is subcontracted to undertake work on our behalf.

This policy is non-contractual and we reserve the right to amend this at any time to reflect business or legislative changes.

WHY THIS POLICY EXISTS

Equality of opportunity and fostering a genuinely inclusive culture is beneficial to everyone. We know that we are stronger when we recognise and draw from the rich diversity within our community.

In addition, we have a responsibility to comply with the Equalities Act 2010, which sets out the legislation around equality. Therefore, we aim to educate our staff and take proactive steps to prevent any unfairness or discrimination within our workplace.

OUR COMMITMENTS

MQ is committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- Promoting dignity and respect to all
- Providing training, development, and progression opportunities to all staff
- Reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness



- Embedding equality, diversity and anti-racism into our organisational strategy, as well as every role at MQ
- Selecting those for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit purely on the basis of aptitude and ability
- Having clear procedures that enable our candidates and staff members to raise a grievance or complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated
- Treating breaches of our equality and diversity policy as misconduct, which are investigated where required and may lead to disciplinary proceedings
- Having an open culture and encouraging all staff to come forward with any issues they need assistance with so we can help and support them

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ⇒ **The CEO** is accountable for leading our EDI strategy and reporting to the Board of Trustees, reviewing the progress on our objectives.
- ⇒ **Line Managers** should ensure that this policy is communicated to all staff and provide advice and guidance to staff regarding their conduct. Managers are required to encourage inclusion, discourage prejudice and role model appropriate behaviours. They must also take speedy and appropriate action to deal with any breaches of the policy, or behaviour that could lead to a breach of the policy. Managers are responsible for applying employment practices, policies and procedures fairly and consistently, and for highlighting and addressing any practices which could lead to discrimination.
- ⇒ **All staff members** are responsible for familiarising themselves and acting in accordance with this policy. Employees should inform their manager if they know or suspect that discrimination or harassment is occurring.

MONITORING

We will aim to collect and maintain records of gender, ethnic origin, age and disability for all employees and for internal and external job applicants. This information will be collected and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) and will only be used to monitor compliance with the principles of diversity, inclusion and equality. The information will be analysed at regular intervals by the CEO to inform EDI strategies.

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO DISCRIMINATION

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination against any individual, which includes those with protected characteristics (see a full list in Appendix 2)

If any staff member feels they have been discriminated against, they should initially raise the matter informally with their line manager. Where the individual is not an employee or the concern is about the line manager, the complaint should be raised with the CEO (see Appendix 3 for the main types of discrimination).

If the nature of the complaint is very serious or an employee wishes to raise the matter formally, please follow the steps set out in the Grievance Policy (or our complaints policy for self-employed contractors)

False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith, will be dealt with under the Charity's Disciplinary Procedure.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures may need to be consulted in conjunction with this policy as applicable:

- Grievance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Dignity at Work Policy



Appendix 1 – Definitions

- ⇒ **Equality** - At its core, equality means fairness: it means ensuring that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics. Equality also means equality of opportunity: it is about ensuring that those who may be disadvantaged can get the tools they need to access the same, fair opportunities as their peers.

- ⇒ **Inclusion** - Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. An inclusive environment can only be created once we are more aware of our unconscious biases, and have learned how to manage them.

- ⇒ **Diversity** - Diversity is recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and thought which allows for an empowered culture of creativity.

Appendix 2 – Protected characteristics and types of discrimination

The Equalities Act 2010 identifies 9 protected characteristics:

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

Appendix 3 - Types of Discrimination

There are four types of discrimination

Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The following are the kinds of discrimination, which we will not tolerate.

Direct discrimination	Where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics set out above. [An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant]
Indirect discrimination	Where people with a protected characteristic is disadvantaged by an unjustified rule, policy or process e.g. you need 10 years' service to get a promotion
Discrimination by association	Treating one person less favourably than another because they associate someone with a person who has a protected characteristic
Discrimination by perception	Treating someone less favourably than others because those others think that person has a protected characteristic – it applies even if the person does not in fact have the perceived protected characteristic e.g. you think someone is younger or older based on how they look