

Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure

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Contents		Page(s)
1.0	<u>Policy Statement</u>	3
2.0	<u>Objective</u>	3
3.0	<u>Scope</u>	3
4.0	<u>Legislation</u>	3 - 4
5.0	<u>Implications</u>	4
6.0	<u>Application</u>	4
7.0	<u>Designated Person</u>	4
8.0	<u>Discrimination & Harassment Definition</u>	4 - 5
9.0	<u>Reasonable Adjustments</u>	5
10.0	<u>Individuals Responsibilities</u>	5 - 6
11.0	<u>Implementing the Equality & Diversity Policy</u>	6 - 7
12.0	<u>Monitoring & Reviewing the Equality & Diversity Policy</u>	7
13.0	<u>Grievances</u>	7
14.0	<u>Employees Engaging in Discriminatory Conduct</u>	7 - 9
15.0	<u>Mediation</u>	9

1.0	Policy Statement
1.1	Quinn Infrastructure is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
1.2	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.
1.3	Quinn Infrastructure also aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its clients, customers and contractors in the means by which they can access the services supplied by the Company. The Company believes that all employees and clients are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.
1.4	<p>All employees and contractors whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation. We believe that Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense and therefore we are committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued. • ensure every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. • make training, development and progression opportunities available to all staff. • continuously review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
2.0	Objective
2.1	To prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination.
2.2	To ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, redundancy and service provision are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.
3.0	Scope
3.1	<p>This Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure applies to all Quinn Infrastructure employees, irrespective of job or grade, who are in full-time or part-time employment and are on permanent, fixed-term or temporary contracts of employment. The policy is also applicable to contractors and consultants.</p> <p>This policy and procedure do not form part of the individual contract of employment and may be changed by Quinn Infrastructure at any time at its absolute discretion.</p>
4.0	Legislation
4.1	The Equality Act 2010. The Act harmonises and replaces previous Equality legislation and ensures consistency in what Quinn Infrastructure needs to do to make our workplace a fair environment and to comply with the law.
5.0	Implications

5.1	<p>Any act of discrimination, bullying or harassment 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.</p> <p>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</p>
6.0 Application	
6.1	<p>This policy relates to all aspects of employment and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertisement, recruitment and selection • pay, terms and conditions of service • training and staff development • probation and promotion • grievance and disciplinary procedures • redundancy & termination of employment
6.2	<p>Additionally persons not employed by Quinn Infrastructure but involved in its activities, i.e. clients, external and internal contractors, self-employed contractors and placement providers etc. are expected to comply with the terms of the policy.</p>
6.3	<p>The policy applies to the treatment of potential future employees as well as existing and past employees.</p>
7.0 Dedicated Person	
7.1	<p>Human Resources Manager</p>
8.0 Discrimination & Harassment definition	
8.1	<p>Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. These are known as Protected Characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Discrimination may be direct or indirect.</p>
8.2	<p>Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.</p>
8.3	<p>Third Party Harassment</p> <p>The Equality Act makes Quinn Infrastructure potentially liable for harassment of our employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of Quinn Infrastructure such as customers or clients. Quinn Infrastructure will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, we are aware that it has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.</p> <p>Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.</p>
8.4	<p>Victimisation</p> <p>Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.</p>

9.0 Reasonable Adjustments	
9.1	<p>Quinn Infrastructure has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making adjustments to premises. • Re-allocating some or all of a disabled employee's duties. • Transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability. • Relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office. • Giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation. • Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee. • Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees. <p>Any other adjustments that the Company considers reasonable and necessary provide such adjustments are within the financial means of the Company.</p>
9.2	<p>If an employee has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by Quinn Infrastructure, they should contact HR.</p>
10.0 Individual Responsibilities	
10.1	<p>All Managers and staff share responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity.</p>
10.2	<p>The Senior Management Team has overall responsibility to provide equal opportunity for all job applicants and employees, to seek to eliminate any discriminatory practice in respect of the treatment of the providers and users of the service and to promote equality of opportunity. The adoption, implementation and monitoring of this policy ensure the Senior Management Team satisfies their responsibilities.</p>
10.3	<p>The person with responsibility for HR will co-ordinate the introduction, operation and monitoring of this policy on behalf of Quinn Infrastructure. It will be their duty to ensure managers receive guidance on the proper application of the policy.</p>
10.4	<p>All employees, subcontractors, consultants and agents of Quinn Infrastructure are required to act in a way that does not subject any other employees or clients to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic.</p>
10.5	<p>The Responsibility of Managers and Supervisors Managers and Supervisors will be responsible for the practical application of this policy and in particular should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees are aware of their responsibilities according to the legislation and this policy. • Employment decisions are not discriminatory. • Proper records of employment decisions and fair standards of employment practice are maintained.
10.6	<p>The Responsibility of Individual Employees All employees have a responsibility for ensuring that they do not unlawfully discriminate during the course of their employment. In particular, individual employees must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the policy and their responsibilities in relation to colleagues and customers. • Adhere to and give support to any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity. • Not themselves discriminate, e.g. as supervisors or managers responsible for selection decisions in recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, etc. • Not themselves discriminate in applying conditions of employment. • Not induce, or attempt to induce, other employees or unions, or management to practice discrimination. • Not victimise or attempt to victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints, supported complaints or provided information on discrimination. • Not harass, abuse or intimidate other employees, e.g. in attempts to discourage them from

	continuing their employment.
11.0	Implementing the Equality & Diversity Policy
11.1	<p>Quinn Infrastructure aims to maintain and extend a fair working environment for all employees through the revision and development of policies to promote equality and diversity in employment at every stage. The stages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and Selection including Advertising Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. • Training and Development and Promotions • Retention and Retraining • Terms and Conditions of Employment and Benefits • Grading • Occupational Pensions • Discipline • Grievance • Dismissal • Redundancy
11.2	<p>Quinn Infrastructure will provide briefing and training sessions in Equality to Managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equality issues are likely to arise, as well as enabling them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.</p> <p>Quinn Infrastructure will also provide briefing and training sessions to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work at Quinn Infrastructure to help them understand their responsibilities under both the Dignity at Work and the Equality and Diversity Policies & Procedures.</p>
12.0	Monitoring & Reviewing the Equality & Diversity Policy
12.1	<p>Monitoring is an essential part of the Equality and Diversity Policy and as such the procedures for this are detailed below:-</p> <p>To facilitate the ongoing monitoring process. Quinn Infrastructure will maintain records of the sex, age, disablement, ethnic origin, gender and sexual orientation of all employees, contractors and consultants. Such records will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the equality of opportunity. Analysis of the composition of the workforce will be carried out.</p>
12.2	<p>The results of monitoring will be reviewed to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy. If necessary, adjustment will be made to the policy to ensure that equality and diversity opportunities are afforded to all applicants and employees. If factual evidence is found which suggests that the policy is ineffective, this should be investigated and appropriate positive action may be taken.</p>
13.0	Grievances
13.1	<p>If an employee feels that they have suffered discrimination they are encouraged to attempt to raise and solve the issue informally before commencing Quinn Infrastructure formal grievance procedures.</p> <p>Informal steps that may be taken include talking to your Manager or HR about the issue, or talking directly to any individual who you feel is responsible for the discrimination.</p> <p>If you feel unable to deal with the issue informally, or if informal steps have failed to solve the problem, you should raise the matter according to Quinn Infrastructure formal grievance procedures.</p>
13.2	<p>Quinn Infrastructure will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievances.</p>

	An employee will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.
14.0	Employees Engaging in Discriminatory Conduct
14.1	Behaviour or actions found to be contrary to this Policy and the general spirit of the laws on which it is based will be considered to be serious disciplinary matters. In the most severe of cases, the employee responsible may face dismissal. Any such employees will have the right to appeal against such a summary dismissal.
14.2	Discrimination leads to an unpleasant and non-productive work environment. No employee has the right to discriminate against another. If an employee is executing Quinn Infrastructure policy that may be discriminatory, Quinn Infrastructure will not normally hold the employee responsible for any negative effects of that policy. Employees should inform the Designated person if they become aware of any discriminatory effects that a policy may have.
14.3	If a grievance is received by Quinn Infrastructure that cites the actions of an employee as being discriminatory against another member of staff, Quinn Infrastructure will send the accused employee a copy of the written complaint and arrange a mutually agreed date for that employee to attend an interview. Quinn Infrastructure reserves the right to transfer the accused employee to a different department or location during the investigation process. Alternatively, Quinn Infrastructure may suspend the employee on full pay during that period.
14.4	If the employee is unable to attend the interview they must inform Quinn Infrastructure as soon as possible. Quinn Infrastructure will re-schedule the interview. If the employee fails to attend the interview and does not have a good reason, this fact will be noted on that employee's record and they may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
14.5	At the interview the accused employee will be given the opportunity to present their case. The employee may bring another person to the interview (work colleague or accredited trade union representative). Any evidence or information should be submitted to HR in advance of the interview.
14.6	Following the interview the matter will be investigated and a decision will be made after considering all relevant evidence and submissions. The employee will be informed of Quinn Infrastructure decision in writing within 5 working days. The employee may be required to attend a training course, move to a different department or to another location within Quinn Infrastructure either on a temporary or permanent basis. The employee may receive a caution, final warning or may be dismissed with or without notice depending on Quinn Infrastructure findings but not until a formal disciplinary hearing has taken place.
14.7	The employee shall have the right to appeal against Quinn Infrastructure decision. If the employee wishes to appeal they should inform Quinn Infrastructure of their intention to do so and the grounds on which their appeal is based in writing within 5 working days of the date on the initial decision letter.
14.8	If the employee gathers information or evidence that was not available at the time of the first meeting at any point prior to the arrival of Quinn Infrastructure's initial decision letter, any such evidence should be submitted to HR.
14.9	If the employee appeals they will be invited to another interview to discuss the initial decision. Where possible, Quinn Infrastructure will seek to provide a new interview panel to consider the facts of the appeal. The employee may bring a work colleague or accredited trade union representative to the hearing.
14.10	At the meeting Quinn Infrastructure and the employee will discuss the original decision. If further investigation is required as a result of new evidence or information, this will be carried out in due course. A written appeal decision will be sent to the employee within 5 working days of the disciplinary appeal meeting. If the investigation continues beyond 10 working days Quinn Infrastructure will write to the employee informing them that the disciplinary appeal is still being considered and will provide an estimated date of completion for the investigation.

	Upon completion of the investigation into the facts of the disciplinary appeal the employee shall be informed of the decision and then within 5 working days Quinn Infrastructure shall issue a final written response to the appeal. This decision is final and the employee shall have no further rights of appeal.
15.0	Mediation
15.1	An independent third party or mediator can sometimes help resolve equality and diversity issues. Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. Any agreement comes from those in dispute, not from the mediator. The mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do.
15.2	Mediators may be employees trained and accredited by an external mediation service, who then act as internal mediators in addition to their day job, or from an external mediation provider like ACAS.
15.3	There are no hard-and-fast rules for when mediation is appropriate but it can be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For conflict involving colleagues of a similar job or grade, or between a Line Manager and their staff. • At any stage in the conflict as long as any ongoing formal procedures are put in abeyance. • To rebuild relationships after a formal dispute has been resolved. • To address a range of issues, including relationship breakdown, personality clashes, communication problems, bullying and harassment.
15.4	Quinn Infrastructure view mediation as a last resort and therefore will only consider using this service when all other routes have been exhausted.