



**reconstruct**

# **Equality & Diversity Policy**

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### **Overview**

Reconstruct is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The co-operation of all those who work for or volunteer for the organisation, or who access our services, is essential for the success of this policy.

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.

### **Our policy's purpose**

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
2. 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
  - sexual orientation
3. 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
  - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

### **The law**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment or service provision because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins),

sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics". Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics. Employees must also not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

- direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
- indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

## **Our Commitment**

To continue to build and maintain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we work within. We encourage employees to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued. We are an equal opportunities employer and promotes equality of opportunity through all its activities. We believe that having a workforce with a range of backgrounds, abilities, knowledge, and skills enhance our ability to offer high quality services to children and young people and their families.

## **The Organisation commits to:**

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion 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 employees are recognised and valued.

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

All employees 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 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 employees, 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.
- Make decisions concerning employees 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, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

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

## **Responsibilities**

### **Management responsibilities**

All Managers from directors, CEO, Head of services to Team Managers and Coordinators to have a responsibility to ensure their employees work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment or bullying by behaving in a professional and appropriate manner, challenging inappropriate behavior and supporting employees who make a complaint

They should:

- Ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility;
- Familiarise themselves with the procedures in all equal opportunities documentation; Ensure that they are not instructing employees to act in a discriminatory manner;
- Ensure that they are not putting pressure on employees to discriminate;
- Bring the details of the policy and procedure documents to the attention of all employees;
- Ensure that information on equal opportunities is incorporated in all induction processes for new or temporary employees and is supported by ongoing training.
- Respond to allegations of discrimination and harassment fairly, quickly and effectively
- Prioritise their teams attendance at equality training to equip them with the competences

- needed to comply with this policy
- Attend all mandatory Equality and Diversity training

### **Individual responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of employees, volunteers and all those working on behalf of the company at all levels to:

- Co-operate with any measure introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and avoid unlawful discrimination;
- Report any discriminatory acts or practices;
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- Not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination;
- Not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others
- Attend mandatory Equality & Diversity training

### **Training and development**

Reconstruct are committed to ensure that everyone has an equal and fair opportunities for training and development.

#### **We commit to:**

- Ensuring all employees have received Equality and Diversity training
- Ensuring all applications for training courses and qualifications are considered fairly
- Consider if any special arrangements need to be considered with the delivery of training at the venue or online
- Consider cultural or religious requirements of attendees attending the training e.g. dietary needs
- Ensure that training is provided on subjects that will support and train the workforce in a fair way
- Consider the times of the training and if these discriminate against employees, advocates and volunteers who work else where and other commitments.

### **Recruitment**

Our recruitment team, Managers are all safer recruitment trained, and trained in equality and diversity, ensuring compiling job descriptions, advertising positions, interviewing applicants and selecting new employees, in a manner which avoids any discriminatory assumptions and unlawful discrimination during the recruitment process.

#### **We commit to:**

- Short listing of applicants is undertaken by at least two people
- Inviting all applicants to identify any special arrangements they may need for interview
- Make reasonable adjustments to interviews to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability
- Not asking personal questions which could be seen to discriminate or unnecessarily intrusive
- Sharing the interview questions prior to the interview
- Ensuring the applicant is clear what the role entails so they can fully consider whether

the job may conflict with religious beliefs, or impact on their health and wellbeing.

## **Disability**

Reconstruct have a duty of care to making reasonable adjustments and removing barriers for registered disabled people so they can carry out their duties:

We commit to:

- Providing specialist equipment if required
- Ensuring their working hours suit their needs
- Assessing their working environment to ensure it is suitable

## **Religious events**

Reconstruct recognise that employees may wish to take holiday to enable participation in religious or cultural events. In these circumstances we will endeavour to approve holiday where possible, but ask that holiday is submitted as far in advance as possible.

Should employees require support at work to enable participation in religious or cultural events (i.e., fasting, private prayer, meditation, etc.) we will commit to:

- Alter working pattern so breaks can be granted at times that coincide with their needs for their religious observance
- Treat all employees, whatever their religion or belief, equally in respect of requests for time off for religious observance or requests for alterations to their working patterns for religious reason.

## **Promotion**

Reconstruct ensures that opportunities are made available to all staff, and is made available to everyone on an equal and fair basis.

If a role has been temporarily covered by a member of the staff, Reconstruct ensure that the role is still advertised and everyone is giving a fair opportunity to apply.

## **Unconscious bias**

Reconstruct understand how a person's thoughts can depend on their life experiences and sometimes they have beliefs and views about other people that might not be right or reasonable.

This is known as 'unconscious bias' and includes when a person thinks:

- better of someone because they believe they're alike
- less of someone because that person is different to them, for example, they might be of a different race, religion or age

This means people could make a decision influenced by false beliefs or assumptions.

Sometimes it's also called 'stereotyping'.

We commit to ensuring we avoid unconscious bias at work by:

- ensuring all staff, workers, volunteers undertake training on unconscious bias
- advertising a job vacancy in at least 2 different places to reach a wide range of people from different backgrounds
- getting recruiting managers to agree to make each other aware if they notice stereotyping
- at each stage, having more than one person sifting job applications, interviewing the applicants and deciding who gets the job
- allowing time to make decisions, for example on recruitment, promotions or grievance and disciplinary outcomes
- keeping a written record of why decisions were made

### **Grievances and complaint**

If an employee considers they have been unlawfully discriminated against they may use the company grievance procedure. If a service user, worker or volunteer feel they have been unlawfully discriminated against they raise this for companies' complaint process.

Complaints can be raised via an informal or formal route and should be made as soon as possible and normally within a month of the incident.

Employees may find it useful to discuss their concerns with their Manager, a member of the HR team or another trusted person.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and will be updated in line with changes in the law.

All information collected on applicants and employees is used for monitoring purposes only and will not influence any decisions by the company during their employment, such as promotion, and pay. As per the equality and diversity act 2010. All data will processed as per our GDPR policy.

## VERSION CONTROL

			Document Owner	Reconstruct Ltd
			Status	Active
			Next Review	30/09/2024
Version	Revision Date	Section Revised	Person undertaking Revision	Reason for Revision
V2_2023	11/10/23	All	AD	Review of policy, rebranding, and implemented version control mechanism opposed to having just date for next review