

# Equality & Diversity Policy



## Policy Statement

The success of Climate-KIC depends on its people. Capitalising on what is unique about individuals and drawing on their different perspectives and experiences will add value to the way we do business.

Our diversity will enrich our capacity for innovation, fostering new levels of creative thinking. It will also enable us to engage with a wider audience and stakeholder base, enhancing our partner and stakeholder relationships and helping Climate-KIC to capitalise on opportunities and maximise its impact. Moreover, maintaining a diverse workforce will enable Climate-KIC to become an employer of choice; one which is able to access, recruit and develop the best talent from the widest possible talent pool.

We are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity within Climate-KIC, and will constantly strive to create a productive environment where everyone has an equal chance to succeed. We are also committed to promoting and preserving equality in those areas in which Climate-KIC has influence.

We all have a responsibility to embrace and support this vision and must continue to challenge behaviour and attitudes that prevent us from achieving this. Using fair, objective and innovative employment practices, our aim is to ensure that:

- Climate-KIC offers an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all its people are recognised and valued
- All Climate-KIC people and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment
- All Climate-KIC people have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour, whether based on sex, trans-gender status, marital status, civil partnership status, race, disability, age, religion or sexuality
- All Climate-KIC people achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria.

Accordingly, we recognise and seek to fulfil our obligations under anti-discrimination law. In summary, these obligations require the application of the principle of equal opportunities at all stages of the employment relationship and make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, any gender reassignment or age.

## Scope

Climate-KIC is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all job applicants and our people regardless of:

- gender or marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity leave ("sex");
- race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins ("race");
- disability or mental or physical impairment ("disability");
- religion or belief ("religion"), including lack of belief;
- sexual orientation;
- being a part time employee or a fixed-term employee or trade union member;
- any gender reassignment; or
- age.

The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of employees

whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or fixed term employees, ex-employees, job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who are not our employees.

The policy statement applies equally to the treatment of our visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by our people.

It is important to note that discrimination or harassment may be unlawful and that individuals may be sued personally by victims and/or in serious cases may face criminal charges.

Climate-KIC treats allegations of breaches of this policy seriously. Such breaches may be considered gross misconduct and disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious or persistent offences, will normally be taken against Climate-KIC people who do not comply with it.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment.

### **What is Discrimination?**

We seek in this policy to explain some of the broad principles of discrimination law and how they might affect you. However, discrimination law is a complex area and this policy is not intended as a summary of the law, nor is it intended to affect your legal rights.

It is of course not possible to list all types of discriminatory behaviour and you should contact the HR Manager if you feel that you are suffering or have suffered any discrimination.

**Direct discrimination** occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional.

Where an individual is treated unfairly because others think that he/she possesses a particular protected characteristic, this is known as perceptive discrimination. Associative discrimination occurs where an individual is discriminated against because of someone he/she has a connection with who has or is thought to have a protected characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where the individual's employment is subject to an unjustified rule, policy or practice which places one group (e.g. a racial group) at a particular disadvantage when compared to others.

**Victimisation:** Discrimination by way of victimisation occurs where an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues because he/she has taken action to assert their statutory rights or assisted a colleague in that regard.

**Harassment** occurs where there is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the victim's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading humiliating or offensive environment. Please see our Anti-bullying & Harassment Policy for further details.

**Discrimination on Grounds of Pregnancy and Maternity Leave** occurs when during a protected period a pregnant woman is treated less favourably than if she had not been pregnant; or is treated less favourably for exercising, seeking to exercise, having exercised or having sought to exercise her statutory right to maternity leave.

**Disability Discrimination** occurs when a person with a disability is treated less favourably because of his/her disability than a person without a disability (direct discrimination). Indirect disability discrimination applies where the employer implements a rule, policy or practice which puts disabled people at an unfair disadvantage compared with people who aren't disabled.

Discrimination arising from a disability occurs where an individual is treated unfairly because for a reason which relates to the disability (i.e. how that disability manifests itself, for example mobility) and there is no good reason for the employer's treatment. Discrimination can also amount from an employer's failure to make

reasonable adjustments for a disabled employee. As with other forms of discrimination, victimisation or harassment can amount to discrimination.

"Disability" is defined in the UK's Disability Discrimination Act as "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities". Definitions of the term 'disability' may vary across Climate-KIC's operating territories.

If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment with us, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible. You may also wish to advise the HR Manager of any reasonable adjustments to your working conditions or the duties of your job which you consider to be necessary, or which would assist you in the performance of your duties.

The HR Manager may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate the suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments.

### **Implementing Equality of Opportunity**

As an employer, we seek to ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated equally and assessed on their own individual abilities and merits. This, for example, includes arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion, grievance and disciplinary processes, selection for redundancies, references, benefits, work allocation and any other employment related activities.

Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Our selection procedures are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding discrimination. Person and job specifications shall be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis.

Access to training, development and career opportunities will be granted based on individual needs, abilities and merit. The impact of training, appraisals, promotion and career development decisions on those with protected characteristics should be considered.

Climate-KIC people doing equal jobs with equivalent skills and experience will be treated equally in relation to their pay, terms and conditions of employment, benefits, facilities and other services.

The impact of working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress codes, benefits and other conditions of employment on those with protected characteristics should be considered.

Those working at management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the aims and objectives of Climate-KIC with regard to equal opportunities.

All Climate-KIC people have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Breach of this policy is potentially a serious disciplinary matter and depending on the circumstances can amount to gross misconduct justifying immediate dismissal.

### **Making a Complaint**

If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds you are entitled to raise the matter through our grievance procedure.

If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Anti-bullying & Harassment Policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated, as far as is possible, in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Please note though that it may not always be possible to investigate your complaint properly, or to be fair to others, if all matters are kept confidential. Normally if this situation arises you will be asked whether you would like us to make the relevant disclosure and proceed with the grievance. Please note that we may have a duty to protect your colleagues that may make it appropriate to disregard your wish for confidentiality for example if there is a safety concern.

You will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for bringing a complaint under this procedure or taking part in any investigation. Any retaliation against any person employed or engaged by us for making a complaint or assisting in an investigation under this policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other employee on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability or age or otherwise act in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

As this policy applies equally to our relations with visitors, clients, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are found to have discriminated against or harassed a client or supplier you will also be subject to disciplinary action.

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