

Redress Scotland Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out Redress Scotland's commitment to being an organisation with equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart. It is important that all of our people feel valued and respected and treated with dignity and compassion and we are committed to creating an inclusive and respectful organisation by preventing and eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation in every way possible. This policy aims to provide clear advice on how to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all employees, panel members and board members and anyone else working or providing services to on behalf of Redress Scotland. All of our people are required to follow this policy.

3. What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

What is equality?

Ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristics, including areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. See below for a full list of protected characteristics.

What is diversity?

It aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

What is inclusion?

An inclusive organisation is one where everyone feels valued. An organisation where people feel safe to engage, to suggest different ideas, to raise issues, knowing this it is acceptable to do so. Inclusion can also be about doing things differently to how they have been done before. As a non departmental public body, our starting point for all equality, diversity and inclusion work must be the Equality Act 2010, and the protected characteristics contained within it:

- age

- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- part-time or fixed-term contract status (unless any treatment is objectively justified)
- trade union membership status / activities
- offending background

4. Guiding Principles

We will treat all of our people and any potential job applicants with dignity, respect and compassion, recognising the value of each individual and embracing the values of diversity.

Equality and diversity is not about treating everyone the same. It's about acknowledging and respecting differences and changing the way we work if necessary. We will ensure all our policies follow the guiding principles set out in this policy. We aim to create a working environment where:

- all people have the opportunity and support to give their best;
- there is no discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment or victimisation; and
- all decisions about our people will be based on merit.

5. Our Commitments:

We will ensure that we are an organisation which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion.

We will do this by:-

- encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and this aligns with our values;
- creating 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 and panel members are recognised and valued;

- taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, survivors, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities;
- making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all of our people, 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;
- making decisions concerning our people being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act);
- encouraging applications from underrepresented groups – we have the guaranteed interview for people with disabilities and care experienced if they meet minimum criteria;
- making sure that all job applicants and our people are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. No job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than others because of any of the characteristics described in section 3; and
- reviewing working practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also updating them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

6. How to Raise a Concern

We all have a personal responsibility for the application of this policy. This policy supports our values of dignity, respect and compassion. This policy is also of particular relevance to all our people who are involved with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and organisational decisions which affect others, however everyone regardless of their role is required to assist us in meeting our commitment to provide equality, diversity and inclusion and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Issues with equality or diversity should be raised either informally or formally through our other people processes or complaints, see section 7, and these will be fully investigated. If the investigation finds any inappropriate conduct, these will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. For panel and board members this could mean referral back to Scottish Ministers to reconsider the appointment.

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.

7. Links with Wider Policies

This policy sits alongside relevant policies and procedures such as the code of conduct, grievance procedure, dignity at work and whistleblowing policy.

8. Equality and diversity monitoring

Whilst we have to have due regard to the public sector equality duty, we are not required to report on this. Only bodies listed in schedule 19 of the Equalities Act can be made subject the Scottish Specific Duties. However, it is important to measure effectiveness our equality and diversity policy, so we will collate data to enable us to monitor how well we are performing.

We will use the equalities information employees and job applicants provide when applying for a job to make decisions about appointments. However we separate the monitoring forms from their application forms so recruiting managers will never see this information. Monitoring will help to highlight possible inequalities. This means we can investigate their underlying cause and remove any unfairness or disadvantage. The information required for monitoring is relevant to the aims of the policy and does not affect or impact on the Data Protection Act 1998. All equalities reporting will be presented to the senior management team and to the oversight board as appropriate.