

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

This policy applies to all colleagues under a contract of employment with InterQuest Group, and aims to ensure a commitment to and promotion of equality and diversity within our own internal organisation, and during all of our business activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

InterQuest Group is committed to promoting a supportive and inclusive culture for all InterQuest Group employees, our candidates, clients and other business partners. By integrating individual strengths across a diverse platform, we aim to maximise efficiency and productivity and therefore deliver value across our business.

It is the Company's policy not to discriminate against workers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy or trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. Our workers and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes. The Company shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice within our organisation. The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, to ex-employees.

This policy is for guidance only and shall be provided to all workers, although it does not form part of your contract of employment.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

InterQuest Group's commitment to equal opportunities promotes an inclusive working environment which embraces diversity at every level of our organisation. Our consultants benefit from the widest range of knowledge, skills and experience in this area, ensuring our compliance with relevant legislation and codes of practice, and passing this benefit on to our clients. Equal opportunity is of paramount importance to InterQuest Group, and the Company has worked extremely hard to ensure that its social credentials, such as its policies and achievements in diversity, stay ahead of the market. InterQuest Group colleagues can expect:

- To be treated fairly and without discrimination during your employment, commencing with the recruitment process through to having access to career opportunities and promotions based solely on merit;
- To be fairly appraised and rewarded for your personal contribution to the business;
- To be supported in balancing your work and home life commitments and to have any requests considered objectively in line with business needs;
- To be treated with dignity and respect in a fair and consistent manner in an environment where inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable

TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY?

- This policy applies to all InterQuest Group employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who are not our employees, but who work at the Company (collectively workers);

- All workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, the Company may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of staff and will not therefore tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour;
- The policy statement above applies equally to the treatment of our visitors, clients customers and suppliers by our workers

FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

It is unlawful to discriminate against any customer, client, candidate or third-party using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the Company on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation and membership of the travelling community.

Direct discrimination is deemed to have occurred where one person is treated less favourably than another person in a comparable situation, on any of the grounds set out above.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a practice, criterion or provision puts persons, who differ on any of the grounds set out above, at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless the provision is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Company aims to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to recruitment and selection and the other areas the Company may monitor applicants' racial origins, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. We may also maintain records of this data in an anonymised format for the purposes stated in this policy.

STAFF TRAINING, PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All workers will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit;
- The composition and movement of workers at different levels will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups;
- Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all workers who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- InterQuest Group will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees;
- InterQuest Group will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all workers, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

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 the Company to support you as much as possible. You may also wish to advise your 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. Your 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.

The Company will continue to monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other workers. Where possible and proportionate, the Company will take steps to improve access for disabled workers and service users.

PART-TIME WORKERS

The Company will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression within the Company to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities.

BREACHES OF THE POLICY

If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Company's grievance procedure. If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our anti-harassment policy. All allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker 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. The Company will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

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



Chris Eldridge, Chief Executive Officer, InterQuest Group