



## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

This policy and action plan sets out the way Achates will continue to meet and exceed our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will work to remove barriers of access for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Achates's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ambitions are woven into the mission of the organisation. Achates will actively seek to overcome real or perceived barriers to work, making reasonable adjustments wherever practical. We will achieve our objectives of eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity through our services, employment practices and management, championed and supported by all our Directors, employees and freelancers.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Statement**

Achates opposes any form of direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty 2011: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief or lack thereof, sex, and sexual orientation, caring or parental responsibilities, illness, ability or disability, mental health status, medical condition, physical appearance, genetic features, parentage, descent, political affiliation or opinions or lack thereof, socio-economic background, employment status, spent or irrelevant criminal convictions or any other irrelevant distinction. Achates will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated inclusively, with respect and dignity, and that is free of harassment.

Achates is also committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion by removing barriers to access across its services, recruitment of employees and Directors, and employment practices. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion 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 effectiveness of the organisation.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with Achates to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or

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bullying. Action will be taken under Achates' disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to dismissal. Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should draw the attention of your line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct in accordance with Achates's disciplinary procedure.

### **Monitoring Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusivity**

Achates will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether they are equal, diverse and inclusive. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, Achates will implement them. Achates will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by any form of disability or impairment.

### **Policy**

Achates is, therefore, committed to providing equality of opportunity for all employees by:

1. Preventing any form of direct or indirect discrimination. This includes sexual banter, ableism, classism, homophobic slurs and offensive or suggestive comments which could be deemed harassment;
2. Promoting a good and harmonious working environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment and discrimination will be tolerated;
3. Never infringing on the rights of others through their behaviour, the way they treat others, and the language that they use;
4. To challenge unacceptable language and behaviour when it is seen;
5. All staff will have training and development opportunities made available to them throughout their employment
6. Supporting the right to join a trade union and will not be treated unfairly *on* the grounds of *trade union* membership or non-membership.
7. Fulfilling all legal obligations under relevant National and European Union legislation and associated Codes of Practice;
8. Being committed to ensuring clients are treated in a fair and equitable manner in our dealings with them and that all employees are protected from harassment and discrimination in their dealings with our clients.

## **Legislation**

Legislation covers age, gender, marital or family status; gender reassignment; race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; disability; sexual orientation, religion/belief; trade union membership or non-membership. There are significant penalties associated with unlawful discrimination for both the organisation and the individual. All employees, therefore, have a duty and a responsibility to respect this policy and act in accordance with it. Acts which breach this policy will not be tolerated and will be regarded as misconduct, which could lead to disciplinary proceedings being taken against the offending employee in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. Under equal opportunities legislation employees can be made personally liable for acts of discrimination.

If anyone believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation they are entitled to raise the matter through the formal grievance procedure. Acts which breach this policy will not be tolerated and will be regarded as misconduct, which could lead to disciplinary proceedings being taken against the offending employee in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Legislation also covers witnesses to any unacceptable act if they feel the conduct they have witnessed creates an offensive and degrading environment for them.

## **Equal Pay**

It is unlawful to not pay the same rate for the same work to all.

Achates implements an organisational pay structure which is consistent with the level of expertise and duties required and is determined by the Director who will deal with any queries or complaints about equal pay.

All staff doing the same work will receive the same pay and hold the same job titles. Staff with the same job titles may have different rates of pay determined by levels of experience and longevity in post. These will be set out in the organisational pay structure. All roles will have appropriate and up to date job descriptions outlining the duties of the role.

If an employee is called upon to undertake the full duties and responsibilities of higher graded post, for a continuous period of at least six weeks, they will receive a salary for that period in accordance with the grading of the post temporarily occupied. This does not apply in cases where the extra duties and responsibilities are shared between more than one employee.