



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Registered Charity Number: 1170952

This policy and guidance will be reviewed at least every two years or earlier where there are any legislative changes in relations to equality, diversity and inclusion or when incidents dictate. This will ensure that this document is current and fit for purpose.

This policy is supported in achieving its aims, and should be read in conjunction, with the following Bridging the Gap (BTG) policies and procedures:-

- **Emergency & Dependents Leave**
- **Discipline & Grievance Policy & Procedure**
- **Flexible Working Policy & Procedure**
- **Maternity Leave & Pay Policy & Procedure**
- **Parental Bereavement Leave & Pay Policy & Procedure**
- **Paternity Leave & Pay Policy & Procedure**
- **Shared Parental Leave & Pay Policy & Procedure**
- **Menopause Support in the Workplace Policy**
- **Mental Health First Aid Policy & Procedure**
- **Reasonable Adjustments for Disabilities in the Workplace**
- **Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure**

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Reviewed by: Lynda Mason & Michelle McHale

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1. Our Statement of Commitment

BTG is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among its workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. It aims for its workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and its customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

BTG, in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities, is also committed to anti-discriminatory practice and challenging unlawful discrimination.

2. Definitions

There is no one complete set of agreed definitions for terms like equality, diversity and inclusion. For the purposes of this policy the terms should be understood as follows:-

Equality

Equality means ensuring every individual has equal opportunities. By being conscious of, and actively challenging, bias or prejudice we make sure no-one is treated less favourably because of who they are or what makes them different from other people. BTG understands that this requires a proactive approach to make reasonable adjustments that address the visible and invisible barriers people face.

Diversity

Diversity means having differences within an organisation or setting and recognising that we are all different in many ways. People with differing identities, backgrounds and experiences should all have equitable access to resources and decision-making.

Inclusion

Inclusion means being proactive to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate.

3. Our Aims

When making decisions, the [Equality Act 2010](#) gives BTG a duty to take into account the need to: -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different parts of the community.

The Equality Act protects people against discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics, of which there are 9: -

- 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.

BTG aims to-

- A. provide equality, fairness and respect for all in BTG's employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, as well as applying to work for BTG.
- B. not unlawfully discriminate against anyone in respect of any of the nine protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010.
- C. ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against because they are undergoing peri-menopause or the menopause and who, as a result, are experiencing associated mental and physical health symptoms.
- D. not put any employee or worker at a disadvantage and treat them less favourably because of their menopause symptoms. [Whilst the menopause is not a specific protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, discrimination may arise if positions are taken that are related to a protected characteristic.]
- E. ensure mental and physical health are treated as equally important.
- F. oppose all forms of unlawful sexual harassment.
- G. 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 arrangements
 - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

4. Our Commitments

BTG commits to:-

- A. encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce as they are good practice and make business sense.
- B. create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- C. take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment including sexual, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of BTG'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.

Furthermore, 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 offense.

- D. provide opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, 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.
- E. make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- F. 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.
- G. monitoring equality, diversity and inclusion by monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding attributes such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability. This will assist BTG in meeting its aims and commitments set out in this policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice and considering and taking action to address any issues.

- H. offering menopause support including reasonable adjustments for those experiencing either perimenopause or menopausal symptoms.
- I. working with those with disabilities to ensure that they are able to participate in the workforce, feel valued and respected. This includes making reasonable adjustments

5. Agreement to Follow this Policy

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been written following guidance from ACAS and in reference to Equality and Disability legislation. The policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees, who in their duties may take appropriate action where breaches occur or to ensure compliance.

All staff should understand they, as well as BTG, 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.

BTG expects all its employees and volunteers to adhere to the policy at all times and to report any issues as they occur so remedial action can promptly be taken,

6. Our Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Details of BTG's grievance and disciplinary policy and procedures can be requested from line managers at any time. This includes details of whom an employee should raise a grievance with and steps to be taken.

Use of BTG's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.