

Equal opportunities Equality policy

Registered charity number 1183537

Veterans' Growth's aim is to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and to ensure that all employees and workers are treated fairly and are assessed in relation to their individual skills and abilities.

It is also Veterans' Growth's intent to operate lawfully and not to discriminate against any prospective, current or former members of staff. Veterans' Growth will not condone unlawful discrimination.

This policy applies to everyone who works for Veterans' Growth at all levels, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, home-workers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers and others (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy).

The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of volunteers, beneficiaries, former members of staff, visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our current workforce.

All staff have a role in ensuring that equality is promoted at work. Staff have a personal responsibility to comply with the policy and to ensure, as far as possible, that others do the same. Managers and supervisors must not only adhere to the policy themselves but must also take responsibility for implementing the policy and for taking positive steps to promote equality at work.

Unlawful discrimination is also a disciplinary offence. Appropriate disciplinary action (including summary dismissal for serious offences) will be taken against anyone who violates this policy. If you have any questions regarding this policy please contact The management team.

Responsibility for the policy

Veterans' Growth's Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination.

Scope of the policy
This policy applies to all aspects of working at Veterans' Growth including:

• recruitment and selection;
• development, training and promotion;
• pay, benefits and terms and conditions of employment;
• health and safety;
• conduct at work, discipline and grievances, and bullying and harassment;
• termination of employment, including redundancy selection.
The legal framework

Unlawful discrimination may result in legal proceedings against you personally and against Veterans' Growth and may leave you and Veterans' Growth liable to pay compensation.

The following characteristics are protected by the Equality Act 2010:

• age;
• disability;
• gender reassignment;
• marriage or civil partnership;
• pregnancy or maternity;
• race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin);
• religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief;
• sex;
• sexual orientation (i.e. homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality).

There are four basic types of unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010:

1. Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination means treating someone less favourably than you would treat others because of one of the protected characteristics set out above. This will include any less favourable treatment because you perceive a person to have a protected characteristic (even though they do not in fact have it), or because they associate with a person or persons who have a protected characteristic.

Direct discrimination (whatever the underlying reason) will always be unlawful. It is not possible to justify direct discrimination in any way, except when it relates to age. Age-related direct discrimination may be justified in specific circumstances if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

2. Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination means placing someone at a disadvantage by applying a policy or practice to them that appears to affect everyone in the same way, but in fact has an adverse effect on a group of persons who share one of the protected characteristics set out above. If a person who has that characteristic can show that the policy or practice puts or would put them at a disadvantage compared to others, the policy or practice will be unlawful indirect discrimination unless the employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

3. Harassment

Harassment related to one of the protected characteristics set out above will be unlawful if it consists of unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive, degrading or humiliating environment for that person. Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature is also unlawful harassment.

If you have been the subject of harassment by a colleague or by a third party please refer to the Harassment and Bullying at Work Policy and Procedure.

4. Victimisation

Unlawful victimisation is unfavourable treatment of a person because they have taken action to assert their own legal rights under discrimination law or to assist someone else to do so. A false complaint of victimisation will not be protected unless it is made in good faith.

Disabled persons
The term ‘disabled persons’ applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Such a condition may be an impairment that acts as a limitation of a person’s physical, mental or sensory function on a long-term basis. Legal protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness, e.g. HIV or cancer.

Disabled persons have additional rights. It is unlawful to subject a disabled person to unfavourable treatment because of something arising from a disability, unless the unfavourable treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Where any policy, practice or physical features of the workplace puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to persons who are not disabled, Veterans’ Growth is required to make reasonable adjustments to the policy, practice or physical feature to prevent that disadvantage. This includes a requirement to provide certain reasonable auxiliary aids.

Veterans’ Growth adopts a 'social model' view of disability where barriers that restrict disabled persons in the workplace are to be overcome by Veterans’ Growth so far as is practicable rather than requiring the disabled person to adapt. Note that such barriers are not just physical. Attitudes found in society, based on prejudice or stereotype also disable people from having equal opportunities to be part of society and the display of such attitudes in the workplace will be addressed by Veterans’ Growth.

If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment, you are strongly encouraged to tell Veterans’ Growth about your condition to enable us to give you reasonable support and to discuss with you any reasonable adjustments that might help you.