

<b>HR</b>			 <b>UKSA</b>
<b>POLICY:</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Diversity Policy</b>	<b>DOC REF:</b>	<b>QHR-038</b>
		<b>REV:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ASPECT:</b>	<b>HR Management System</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>24.03.21</b>

## Policy - Statement of Intent

UKSA is committed to encouraging equality, inclusion and diversity among our staff and eliminating unlawful discrimination and inequality.

The aim is for UKSA to be true representative of all sections of society and for all employees to feel respected and that they are treated with equality, dignity and respect. UKSA is fully committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination against our customers and stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equality, fairness and respect for all in UKSA employment, whether on a permanent, temporary, fixed term, full-time or part-time basis, or as part of an Apprenticeship scheme.

This policy is fully supported by the UKSA Executive and Leadership Team.

## Definitions

**Equal Opportunities** – The right to be treated without discrimination. This applies during recruitment processes, whilst in employment and during any leaver process.

**Inclusion** – Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. An inclusive environment can only be created once we are more aware and accepting of our unconscious biases, and have learned how to manage them.

**Equality** – At its core, equality means fairness: we must ensure that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics (see below).

Equality also means equality of opportunity: we must also ensure that those who may be disadvantaged can get the tools they need to access the same, fair opportunities as their peers.

**Diversity** – Diversity is recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, with allows for an equal and empowered culture.

**Unconscious Bias** – Unconscious bias is when people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. For example, a person may be drawn to someone with a similar educational background, from the same area, or who is the same colour or ethnicity as them.

## UKSA Responsibilities

UKSA commits to:

- not unlawfully discriminate in respect of any of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics :
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender
  - Reassignment

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- Marriage or Civil Partnership
  - Pregnancy or Maternity
  - Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
  - Religion or Religious Beliefs
  - Sex or Sexual Orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination in all areas, including:
    - Pay and Benefits
    - Terms and Conditions of Employment
    - Dealing with Discipline and Grievances
    - Dismissal
    - Redundancy
    - Parental Leave
    - Flexible Working
    - Recruitment and Selection
    - Promotion
    - Training and Development Opportunities
  - encourage equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace as good practice
  - create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
  - actively promote dignity and respect as part of our values and culture

## Implementation

UKSA will provide training to managers and all other employees regarding their rights and responsibilities under the Equal Opportunities Policy, including staff conduct, promotion of equal opportunities and a zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

UKSA recognises that individuals, as well as UKSA as the employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment in delivering UKSA's organisational activities and will train all staff accordingly. Any acts of this nature will be dealt with under the UKSA Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure QPR-138, where appropriate action will be taken.

UKSA equal opportunities training will also inform that instances of sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter. UKSA recognises the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and notes that harassment under this legislation, which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic, is a criminal offence.

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## Recruitment

UKSA recruitment processes will ensure fairness in the advertising, selection and appointment of vacancies, and are subject to regular review to ensure they are up to date with relevant legislative changes.

The HR Manager will monitor the make-up of the UKSA workforce regarding information such as age, ethnicity, disability and gender in line with GDPR regulations.

UKSA recognises the overall demographic make-up of the Isle of Wight can be a barrier to recruiting a diverse workforce and commits to promoting ourselves as a fully inclusive employer and encourage applications from all areas of diversity.

## Inclusion

UKSA is committed to being an inclusive employer and ensure that all employees feel safe in speaking up, providing feedback and ideas, suggesting change, and raising issues or concerns to management, knowing that this is encouraged and welcomed.

An inclusive workplace can help to lower the risk of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

## Dignity and Respect

All employees have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect, and UKSA recognises that all employees have a responsibility to set a positive example by treating others with respect and to act in a way which is in line with our values, code of conduct and policies and procedures.

UKSA is committed to providing an environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination or abuse from colleagues or stakeholders, that would breach the right to be treated with dignity and respect. UKSA will not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination in any form.

The UKSA Code of Conduct sets out the types of behaviour we expect to see, and what behaviours are not acceptable.

If you ever feel that you have not been treated fairly, with equality, inclusiveness or with dignity and respect, do not delay in raising your concerns with your line manager, director or HR who will provide support, discuss next steps and outline what processes are open to you.

## Unconscious Bias

UKSA acknowledges that influences such as our background, experiences and environmental conditions can all play a part in shaping our choices, whether we realise it or not, and that we can all display unconscious bias when we favour or discriminate against people because of these influences without even realising it.

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We know that unconscious bias can have a big impact on people-related decisions at work, especially when it comes to recruitment, promotion, performance management and idea generation. When bias is prevalent, we know that organisations, such as UKSA, can struggle to hire diverse teams and efforts to improve inclusion are usually met with limited success.

UKSA commits to providing training to all staff to help recognise and mitigate unconscious bias.

Unconscious bias can manifest in different ways. Below are eight (8) types of bias, and how they might affect decision-making and interactions at work.

- **Affinity bias:** This is when we show a preference for people we are similar to in some way, because we find them familiar and easier to relate to. This could be because of shared characteristics – such as class, ethnicity, or shared interests or hobbies. At work, this could lead us to feel that someone is not talented, or not right for a role, because we don't have the same characteristics or experiences in common.
- **Attribution bias:** This refers to how we perceive our actions and those of others. We tend to attribute our own successes to our skills, and our failures to factors outside our control. However, we tend to see the successes of others as down to luck and attribute their failures to a lack of ability. This can cause unfairness during recruitment and appraisals, for example.
- **Beauty bias:** This type of bias is when we base our opinion too heavily on someone's looks and we may unconsciously favour attractive people for a job – despite the fact that this has no bearing on their ability to carry out the role well.
- **Confirmation bias:** This refers to our tendency to look for evidence that backs up our initial opinion of someone, while overlooking information that contradicts our view.
- **Conformity bias:** This refers to our tendency to take cues from others to arrive at a decision, rather than exercise our own, independent judgement. Having a diverse team – and encouraging them to voice their views openly – means a broader range of knowledge and experiences are brought to the table, ultimately helping more creative and well-considered ideas to emerge, so it's important that people don't feel pressured into agreeing with others' views.
- **Contrast effect:** We compare and contrast people and things all the time to help us put them in context. But comparing employees against each other – favourably or unfavourably – instead of assessing them on their own merits is the contrast effect. For example, the last candidate you interview for a role might seem better than all the others you have already interviewed – but if you had interviewed the same candidate first, you might not have reached the same conclusion.
- **Gender bias:** Gender bias is exactly that, bias based on gender. Ways that gender bias can manifest itself at work can include, for example, a male candidate being hired for a physically demanding role, or senior women being routinely asked to take minutes in meetings instead of men in more junior roles.
- **Halo and horns effects:** This describes our tendency to focus on a particularly good aspect of someone and let the 'halo' glow of that one thing affect our opinion of everything else about them. This can result in us overlooking negative aspects about someone and ultimately lead to us making unbalanced decisions, such as failing to address performance issues or problematic behaviours. Its opposite is the 'horns effect', where we concentrate on a person's failings and overlook their positive attributes or achievements.

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## Links to Relevant Processes or Procedure

Safeguarding Policy

Harassment Policy

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Grievance Procedure

Disability Strategy

Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure

## GDPR

Information and documentation will be held and processed in line with GDPR guidelines.

## Training Requirements

All employees will receive equal opportunities awareness training, diversity and unconscious bias training.

## Review

This policy will be subject to regular review.

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