

Practical Action

GLOBAL DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY AT WORK

Version 1

Date September 2019

Scope All Employees,
Trustees, Consultants,
Volunteers and others
acting on behalf of
Practical Action or its
subsidiaries

Approval required from	Name	Date approved
Policy Owner:	Head of People & Culture	September 2019
Responsible Director:	Finance & Services Director	September 2019
Board approval	N/A	

Queries:	Contact the Policy Owner
Exceptions:	Contact the Responsible Director

Big change starts small

GLOBAL DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

This policy covers all individuals working at all grades and includes employees, consultants, contractors, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency staff or anyone acting on our behalf.

Our commitments

Diversity

Practical Action believe that having a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace culture based on respect will enable us to be an effective organisation. We seek to create an inclusive workplace in which people are accepted as individuals, regardless of their differences and where they feel their contribution is valued. We value the differences that a diverse workforce brings and seek to build a culture of meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency where we benefit from a variety of viewpoints and perspectives.

We will promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination on the grounds of any personal characteristic such as gender, race, religion, ethnic or national origin, caste, tribe, belief, age, marital status, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, or disability. This includes all forms of discrimination defined in the glossary below. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment and with consideration of any disability. We recognise that promoting equal opportunities may involve adjustments being made to the working environment or other employment arrangements e.g. for people with disabilities or to enable women and men to progress within the organisation.

This policy covers, but is not limited to, our practice in recruitment and selection, learning and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct, and termination of employment etc. Diversity and inclusion is not about positively discriminating i.e. setting targets, quotas or making decisions based on a particular characteristic but is about understanding the needs of a diverse group, enabling people to feel included and valued so that they can contribute their best.

Behaviour, actions or words that transgress this policy will be considered under disciplinary procedures.

Dignity at work

Practical Action are committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Harassment and bullying can have very serious consequences for individuals and Practical Action. Harassment or bullying may make people unhappy, may cause them stress and affect their health and family and social relationships, may affect their work performance and could cause them to leave their job. Effects on the organisation can include loss of morale, poor work performance, increased turnover of staff, legal claims and damage to the organisation's reputation.

Some harassment is unlawful discrimination and serious harassment may be a criminal offence.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end. Examples of bullying would include picking on someone or setting them up to fail or making threats or comments about someone's job security without good reason.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a personal characteristic that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct

Examples of harassment would include: physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault; unwelcome sexual advances; demeaning comments about a person's appearance; unwelcome jokes or comments of a sexual or racial nature or about an individual's age; excluding an individual because they are associated or connected with someone; repeated name calling related to an individual's religion or belief, ignoring an individual because they are perceived to have a certain characteristic (whether or not they do); the use of obscene gestures.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Something intended as a "joke" may offend another person. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. Behaviour that any reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend will be harassment without the recipient having to make it clear in advance that behaviour of that type is not acceptable to them e.g. sexual touching. It may not be so clear in advance that some other forms of behaviour would be unwelcome to, or could offend, a particular person, e.g. asking someone for a private drink after work. In these cases, first-time conduct that unintentionally causes offence will not be harassment but it will become harassment if the conduct continues after the recipient has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to them.

A single incident can be harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Making a complaint

If you think you are being discriminated against, bullied or harassed you may be able to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that his or her behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting or you may need to let Practical Action know how a particular practice or behaviour is affecting you. You may feel able to approach the person or your manager yourself, or with the help of someone else at Practical Action. If your concern relates to another person's behaviour, you should tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome, and say that you would like it to stop immediately.

If an informal approach does not resolve matters, or you think the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can make a formal complaint through the approaches set out below.

Employees

If you are an employee, you can make a formal complaint via the Practical Action Global Grievance policy. Given the potential sensitivities of these complaints, you can raise your grievance with either your line manager, People and Culture, or another manager. You will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official of your choice at any meeting dealing with your grievance.

Other individuals

Other individuals who are not employed by Practical Action can complain using section 10 of the Global Complaints Framework, the Complaint (Whistleblowing) Policy. There is a confidential external reporting service which we encourage people with a concern to use.

Responding to complaints

All complaints will be promptly and appropriately investigated. If relevant, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged perpetrator. You will be kept informed of the general progress of the process of investigation subject to data protection requirements.

You have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint in good faith, even if the complaint is not upheld. However, making a complaint that you know to be untrue may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

The organisation will treat complaints of bullying and harassment sensitively and maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible.

Your responsibilities

Every individual acting on behalf of Practical Action is required to assist the organisation to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities and avoid unlawful discrimination and as such are expected to report or resolve concerns that arise. For employees, acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Conduct of this type will often be gross misconduct which can lead to dismissal without notice. Individuals can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation, for any act of unlawful discrimination. Individuals who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Employees should inform the organisation if they believe they have a disability that may disadvantage them. Adjustments will be made wherever reasonable, within a reasonable time frame and in consultation with the employee.

GLOSSARY

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a personal characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.
- **Indirect discrimination** is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is detrimental to individuals who have a particular characteristic compared with people who do not.
- **Associative discrimination** is where an individual is discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a particular characteristic.
- **Perceptive discrimination** is where an individual is discriminated against or harassed due to a perception that they have a particular characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that particular characteristic.