



Equality and Diversity Policy

1 | Introduction

Here at Aquila, we are proud of our track record of delivering a broad spectrum of services that have impacted on a diverse range of customers and stakeholders. Aquila is an inclusive group where all employees, customers and stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity. We recognise, however that this very diversity can result in certain groups or individuals being disadvantaged because of unfair or unlawful discrimination they may experience.

All policies and procedures developed and implemented by members of the Aquila will not discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against anyone, and will promote equality of opportunity for all. Aquila will continue to monitor its approach to equality and diversity on an on-going basis.

2 | Our Commitment

Aquila values diversity and actively promotes the positive benefits it can bring. We seek to employ a workforce which reflects the diverse communities in which we operate and will treat all employees with dignity and respect.

Aquila is also committed to its corporate social responsibility and its social values and seeks to have a positive impact within local communities. Aquila's goal is to make a better, more sustainable, and socially responsible world through our work with affordable housing organisations, charities, schools and sport organisations in the UK and abroad to devise new solutions, opportunities, sources of financial investment and technology. Our goal is for our workforce to be representative of all sections of society. We aim to be an employer of choice and ensure our workforce is able to make a valuable contribution to these objectives whilst ensuring that their health and wellbeing is supported.

The purpose of this policy is to make clear Aquila's commitment to preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in employment and all that we do.

3 | Diversity Statement

Our aims in regard to Equal Opportunities are straightforward. We aim to:

Aquila

- Promote equality and diversity, challenging discrimination and promoting equalities in service delivery and employment
- Create a working environment where everyone is able to give their best. be free from bullying and harassment, feel safe and be treated with dignity and respect
- Ensure that our recruitment decisions are made on the basis of merit. ability, experience and potential and that recruitment processes are fair, open and encourage applications from all sectors in the community with a view to having a workforce which reflects the diversity of the communities and people we serve
- Provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of age, gender, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, race, nationality, religion. working pattern. caring responsibilities. trade union activity or political beliefs and any other grounds.
- Encourage and support our staff to achieve their potential and push their knowledge by providing fair access to training and development opportunities.

Aquila recognises that its success depends on creating a working environment that supports the diverse makeup of its staff. To ensure that our 'diversity offer' goes beyond a paper statement we have implemented a range of supportive initiatives. policies and procedures designed to ensure we practice what we say:

- We are aware of, and fully comply, with all requirements in the Equality Act 2010 on access to premises (e.g. our head office is accessible to people with impaired mobility and wheel chair users). Where new adjustments are required we will implement these where reasonable.
- We provide training to all staff on equality matters across all sections of society so as not to inadvertently offend or discriminate.
- We recruit our staff from within the communities we operate within and are a Disability Committed Employer.
- We actively support flexible working arrangements to support people with family commitments and to help them achieve the right work/life balance.
- We have a comprehensive internal complaints procedure and a confidential reporting policy and process.

4 | The Legal Framework

Our Diversity statement and commitment is supported by legal duties to provide services and employment opportunities fairly and without discrimination. We have a strong moral and social duty to recognise that discrimination takes place and to



do everything we can to challenge prejudice and discrimination. We value diversity and are fully aware and supportive of legislation and statutory duties.

We follow the legislative requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010 which covers all aspects of equality and diversity, replacing previous legislation covering equal pay, sex, race and disability discrimination. We are also mindful of the Human Rights Act 1998.

5 | Our Equalities Action Plan

We are committed to the following activities in relation to Equality of Opportunity. We will:

- Build on equality good practice within our field of operation
- Consult with and involve all clients, stakeholders and staff on this policy
- Provide accessible information and ways people can comment on our services
- Ensure our practices do not discriminate against anyone
- Deliver services which are appropriate to the needs of the service user
- Make sure that all operatives, associates and organisations providing services on our behalf work in line with this policy
- Make sure that all employees know the effects of this policy and are provided with appropriate training.

We have recognised the following sections as key to Aquila's Equality Action Plan. As we continue to develop our Action Plan further sections will be added as part of our commitment. Aquila strive to ensure every individual feels comfortable coming to work wholly themselves and that they have the tools required for them to achieve and continually grow with us.

6 | Age

We understand Aquila is a multi-generational workplace and a number of different ages make up our workforce. We are committed to ensuring age diversity is seen positively and that no individual feels held back or uncomfortable because of their age. To commit to our age-inclusive workforce we commit to the following:

- Actively recruit talent across all ages to continue building the diversity of our workforce
- Offering staff social events that are age inclusive



- Aquila have a menopause policy in place to support staff who are going through the menopause

7 | Gender

Aquila are committed to providing an inclusive workplace for individuals regardless of gender. We recognise that women's progression in the workplace can be held back by barriers such as bias around pay and promotion. We are committed to ensuring all women know they can succeed in our industry. We also recognise that gender is non-binary and some individuals fit within a different category to what they were assigned at birth. We support everyone in their pursuit for comfortable gender. To commit to a gender-inclusive workforce we will:

- Provide accessible information and training to all staff on the impact of gender
- Continue to recruit talent across all genders and non-conforming genders
- Publishing our gender pay gap and percentage of women across Aquila each year

8 | Disability

Aquila recognise that disability is something that can affect any individual. and that disabilities are not always visible. Aquila are committed to providing a culture where staff feel comfortable sharing information about their disability and that they do not feel held back at Aquila. This includes neurodiversity and embracing the talents of those who think differently. To commit to a disability inclusive workforce we will:

- Continue to adhere to our Disability Committed Employer status and where possible continue to progress through this membership scheme
- Provide accessible information and training to all staff
- Provide reasonable adjustments to the working environment



8 | LGBTQIA+

Aquila understand that those who identify as Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transexual-Queer-Intersex-Asexual+ may need additional support in the workplace. We support confidentiality and take a zero-tolerance approach to all homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse in the workplace. To commit to a LGBTQIA+ workforce we will:

- Promote the use of pronouns across email signatures, website biographies and Microsoft Teams names
- Provide appropriate facilities so that trans, non-binary and gender fluid employees have access to the facilities that they feel most comfortable using, such as gender neutral toilets
- Ensure our dress code available to suit all gender identities
- Ensure Transphobic abuse, bullying and harassment is not tolerated and will be dealt with in line with our policy
- We will provide a supportive environment for employees who wish their trans status to be known

9 | Parenthood, Carers & Pregnancy

Aquila want to ensure that parents, including those expecting, feel supported and not judged for putting the needs of their family before their work. This includes expecting parents feeling supported throughout pregnancy and returning to work, and both parents and carers feeling they have a supportive environment and good work-life balance. We commit to supporting parents, carers and those expecting by:

- Offering flexible working hours
- Offering flexibility during the working day should a parent or carer need certain hours protected
- Enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay
- Additional guidance in a number of areas, such as fertility treatment, pregnancy loss and fostering



10 | Ethnic Minorities & Race

Aquila recognise that the experience of ethnic minorities in the workplace can be harder than others. We respect and appreciate what makes our employees different and seek to employ a workforce that reflects the communities in which we operate. To commit to an anti-racist workforce we will:

- Hold educative training sessions on ethnic minority experiences in the workplace. including topics such as microaggressions and allyship
- Publish our workforce data on ethnic diversity makeup
- Continue to review diversity data at the recruitment level to ensure we are inclusive of all audiences
- Continue to adopt the Halo code to embrace Afro-textured hairstyles

11 | Monitoring the policy

We will monitor this policy bi-annually and review it annually.