Dignity at Work Policy

Our Commitments:

At Network Plus, we are dedicated to cultivating a workplace that values and celebrates diversity. We believe that a diverse and inclusive environment fosters innovation, creativity, and success. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is integral to our core values.

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and creating a workplace culture in which diversity and inclusion is valued, and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. As part of our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination in any form, you and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics). We are also committed to providing equitable treatment to all those we deal with as an organisation, including customers and suppliers.

Staff must not engage in any conduct which could intimidate, humiliate or degrade any other person whether they have a legally Protected Characteristic or not.

We strive to create an inclusive culture where all staff feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives. We are committed to avoiding any form of discrimination, harassment, or bias.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote Network Plus commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as part of our everyday working life. Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination in our workplace. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay, benefits and conditions, flexible working and leave, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

We acknowledge the importance of using inclusive language and where possible we have used ‘gender neutral language’ in this policy.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

Who does this Policy Apply to?

This policy applies to all employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers, including all personnel affiliated with third parties.

Who is Responsible for this Policy?

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion.

All managers have overall responsibly for the effective implementation of this policy with guidance from the HR Department. Employees are expected to support line managers.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former staff, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

a) **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views orbecause they might be gay. Direct discrimination can include associative discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of their association with an individual with a Protected Characteristic, and perception discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of the mistaken belief that they possess a Protected Characteristic.

b) **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

c) **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Bullying and Harassment Policy and Sexual Discrimination policy.

d) **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.

Appropriate Behaviour (irrespective of a Protected Characteristic)

It is expected that everyone will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, which can be characterised by:

- Treating others with dignity, trust and respect
- Being open to the difference and value of others
- Having an awareness of the effects our behaviour may have on others
- Working collaboratively to achieve objectives
- Communicating openly and honestly, clearly stating what we mean and what we expect of others
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback as part of normal day-to-day activities, that is evidence based and delivered appropriately starting from the assumption that everyone is working to the best of their abilities, taking account of their current stage of their professional development.

Unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment and victimisation) may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Such unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or email communications or through social media. Unacceptable behaviour of this nature may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. When recruiting or promoting, we will aim to take steps to improve the diversity of our workforce and provide equality of opportunity.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Department or UK Visas and Immigration.

Sub-Contractors, Self-Employed Workers, Agency Staff, Clients, Suppliers & the General Public

The Company will endeavour to ensure that all sub-contractors, self-employed workers, agency staff, clients, suppliers & the general public are treated in a fair, dignified and respectful manner, with the objective that no sub-contractor, self-employed worker, agency staff, client, supplier or member of the general public ought to receive treatment less favourable in relation to the Protected Characteristics.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager or the HR Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager **or** The HR Department may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We assess individuals on a case by case basis, as we are aware that one size does not fit all.

Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination and victimisation may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination, or witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you can raise the through our Grievance Procedure and through our Bullying and Harassment Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about or report discrimination. If you believe you have been victimised for making a complaint or report of discrimination, or have witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you should raise this through our Grievance Procedure.

We encourage the reporting of all types of potential discrimination, as this assists us in ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion principles are adhered to in the workplace. However, making a false allegation in bad faith, or that you know to be untrue, will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.