

Practical Action

GLOBAL DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY AT WORK

Version	0003.00
Date	July 2022
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	July 2022
Responsible Director:	Finance & Services Director	July 2022
Governance and People Committee	Governance and People Committee	July 2022

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

Big change starts small

GLOBAL DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Diversity

Practical Action's vision is for a world that works better for everyone. We believe that this can only be achieved when everyone feels heard, respected, valued and included. We stand against all forms of discrimination. As a global organisation, we value the richness of perspectives and experiences that a diverse workforce brings and believe that having a diverse global team and an inclusive culture based on respect will enable us to be a more ingenious and effective organisation. We seek to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace in which everyone is accepted and respected, regardless of their differences.

This policy sets out Practical Actions commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. **Equity** is created when we consider peoples respective needs, take account of any potential disadvantages, and are open to treating people differently to create fairness and equality of opportunity. **Diversity** is the presence of variety and difference, encompassing where we were born and raised, our identities and our histories, experiences, and the way we think and feel. **Inclusion** is demonstrating behaviours and taking actions so that everyone feels valued at work; enabling all employees to feel safe to come up with different ideas, raise issues and suggestions, knowing this is encouraged.

We will promote equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination or victimisation on the grounds of any personal characteristic including sex, race, religion, ethnic or national origin, caste, tribe, belief, age, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, gender identity or disability. 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. This includes all forms of discrimination defined in the glossary below. 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. We will develop a plan of action to practice and promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including targets, reporting and accountability mechanisms led by our Board of Trustees and Strategic Leadership Team more meaningfully. This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis. All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. 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 cause stress and affect health, family, and social relationships. 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.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate, injure or causes physical or emotional harm to someone. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or calls, happen at work or in other work-related situations, not always be obvious or noticed by others. Examples of bullying would include spreading malicious rumours about someone, consistently putting someone down in meetings, deliberately giving someone a heavier

workload than everyone else, excluding someone from team social events, someone consistently undermining their manager's authority, putting humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media. Sometimes bullying might be classed as harassment, if it's related to a certain personal characteristic.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a personal characteristic that:

- violates a person's dignity, whether it was intended or not
- creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, whether it was intended or not; 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; 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.

A single incident can be harassment if it is sufficiently serious. Some harassment may amount to both an employment matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations, physical attacks or abuse that constitutes a hate crime. In some circumstances, depending on the nature of the incident and the appropriateness of the reporting, we may notify the police, local authority or other relevant regulator or statutory agency such as the Charity Commission in the UK.

POLICY SCOPE

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

This policy does not cover:

- Safeguarding concerns perpetrated against a child or an at-risk adult who comes into contact with our work and is perpetrated by someone acting on our behalf – this is covered by the Safeguarding policy
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Practical Action or associated personnel – this is covered under the Framework for Safeguarding in Communities
- Complaints of harm against adults not considered 'at risk' (see glossary) and who are not acting on our behalf – these are normally dealt with under the Global Complaints (Whistleblowing) policy

Other policies related to this one include the Global Code of Conduct, Global Complaints Framework, Global Grievance policy, and the Safeguarding policy.

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 persons' 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 the Global Complaints (Whistleblowing) Policy. There is a confidential 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. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times when dealing with concerns raised. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and will be kept secure at all times.

Your responsibilities

Every individual acting on behalf of Practical Action is required to assist the organisation to meet its commitment to provide an inclusive and respectful environment and to avoid unlawful discrimination and as such are expected to report or resolve concerns that arise. When a Practical Action employee, Trustee, volunteer, consultant or anyone acting on our behalf develops concerns or suspicions regarding a behaviour that contravenes this policy by a Practical Action employee or anyone acting on our behalf they must report their concerns via the established reporting procedures. Individuals do not need to have, nor should they seek to obtain, evidence to support their concerns – the individual's duty is to report their concerns so that Practical Action can investigate appropriately.

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 are encouraged to 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 unfairly 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.

Victimisation is when someone is treated unfairly because they made or supported a complaint to do with a personal characteristic, or someone thinks they did or might do