



Focus Consultants: Equality of Opportunity and Diversity Policy

Focus Consultants is committed to promoting best employment equality practice in its efforts to eliminate discrimination and create working environments where all are treated fairly, with respect and in accordance with their human rights. We are committed to promoting ethical principles and practices related to the prevention of the exploitation and abuse associated with modern slavery and human trafficking.

One of our most basic beliefs is that everyone should have the opportunity to work. Focus Consultants complies with the applicable employment laws, which include remuneration for our staff at rates above the National Living Wage, and our obligation is to ensure fairness in the hiring and advancement of all employees without discrimination. All of our staff have a personal responsibility for maintaining a respectful work atmosphere, free of abusive or unprofessional conduct. Every employee is expected to respect other people and treat them with dignity.

Focus will take action to ensure that anyone who works for the company or who applies for a job with us will not be treated less favorably than anyone else because of any characteristic defined as a 'protected characteristic' under The Equality Act 2010. This is applicable to avoid discrimination to all persons either directly, by association or indirectly. A protected characteristic may be defined as Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief (including ethical veganism), Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity. We are aware of the recent changes to The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act) 2023 regarding Sexual Harassment prevention and will take all reasonable steps to meet our obligations in this regard.

The Practice recognises that individuals or groups who face discrimination on the grounds of more than one of the above characteristics can potentially experience greater disadvantage. This includes health matters particularly affecting one gender or age group such as Menopause.

This policy is not contractual, but aims to set out how we normally deal with such issues. This policy does not form part of any employment contract and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied or expressed terms to any contract made with us. We reserve the right to amend and update this policy at any time.

Scope

This statement is applicable to all workers, policies and practices associated with our role as an employer. Most particularly, it applies to recruitment and selection, employee training and development, work allocation and promotion. This statement also applies to our role as a service provider and applies to relationships with clients, suppliers and contractors.

This Policy is made available to every member of staff for their retention on commencement of their employment with Focus via our company electronic filing system (the 'cabinet').

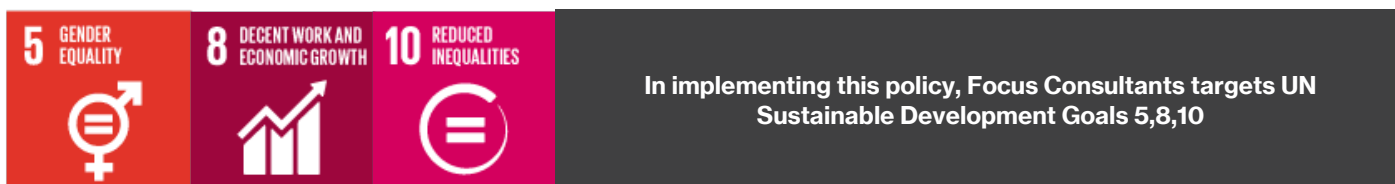
Focus undertakes to comply in full with The Equality Act 2010. The responsibility for observing the law and operating this policy lies with the Partners, but the policy can only work effectively with the support and commitment of all colleagues.

All employees, irrespective of their job or seniority, should familiarise themselves with this policy, and be aware of their responsibility and role in promoting equality of opportunity and not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues, job applicants or ex-employees, nor tolerating such behaviour. Employees are also encouraged to challenge any unacceptable behaviour should they either witness it or experience it directly.

Employees should be aware that not only are we, as the employer, liable for any cases of discrimination or harassment that occur, but individuals also may be held personally liable for their own acts and behaviour.

Impact

We set annual SMART objectives and plan our corporate responsibility initiatives by targeting actions under the banners of Environment, Society and Governance and logging these centrally. Focus strives to advance our contributions to the UN Sustainability Development Goals through all company policies and activities. This policy is designed to primarily contribute to the following goals:



Diversity Statement

At Focus we embrace and actively promote diversity in the workplace. We have both a legal and moral duty to create a greater understanding of a diverse workforce in all aspects of our operation. We will not accept any unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or ethical/philosophical belief.

When working with partnerships of public and private organisations we endeavour to introduce agreed standards on equality with which to represent the partnership. We frequently work with specialist sub-contractors in the delivery of programmes and projects and ensure all agree to adopt appropriate equality policy through contractual procedures.

We believe in team spirit, enjoyment and ownership. We recognise that our staff will have different needs and aspirations in respect of their career paths. We continually strive to create a stimulating and motivational environment where our staff can develop to reach their full potential. We provide a positive, supportive environment with a personal development programme for all that is tailored to meet individual requirements whether from a viewpoint of cultural difference or workplace adjustment needs for, for example, disability, parental flexibility needs, neurodivergence or any other personal attribute.

It is our objective to provide our clients with an honest and fair representation of the diverse society in which we live and to benefit from the widest pool of talent by welcoming diverse staff from a range of educational and family backgrounds, based on merit, and enabling them to give of their best whilst at Focus.

We believe that:

- all people should have an equal chance to apply for and be considered for jobs
- some applicants can miss out on job opportunities because of their background
- some people have flawed, preconceived ideas about what others can or cannot do
- some employees require more support to compete equally with others but are valuable resource
- harassing or discriminatory behaviour is not acceptable
- people's differences should be valued and used advantageously
- clients of the Practice are best served by a workforce that reflects the local community.

Employer Responsibilities

As an employer Focus aims to achieve equality of opportunity in its employment by undertaking to:

- comply fully with and implement legal requirements set out in relevant legislation and guidance provided in Codes of Practice and require all collaborative partners and suppliers to do the same.
- create working environments that promote fair and equal opportunities.
- plan, implement and monitor the equal opportunities policy.
- ensure all employees know about the policy, and that any incidents of victimisation, discrimination and harassment are dealt with as disciplinary offences.
- offer training and guidance in respect of equality and diversity, plus Harassment and Bullying to help staff understand their duties under the law and our policy.
- implement and regularly review employment procedures and change them where they are found to be actually or potentially discriminatory
- implement the policy in recruitment practices, including in advertisements, and monitor the successful job applicants recruited with different protected characteristics – including accommodating reasonable adjustments for interview participants and selecting based on scored skills and competence.
- monitor the existing workforce and job applications to see if the policy is working and addressing under-representation, where the (voluntary) data is supplied
- make sure that all information relevant to the policy is publicly available
- take disciplinary action against any employee who is in breach of the equal opportunities policy
- develop and implement positive action initiatives, aimed at redressing the under-representation of particular groups who experience discrimination in the labour market – by encouraging applications from within such a group, or at selection stage where we have equally qualified candidates
- ensure that Terms and Conditions of employment can accommodate access needs and flexible work practices
- provide procedures, support and guidance for employees and job applicants to make a complaint who believe they have been treated unfairly
- recognise and adopt best practice on all employment matters.

Employees' Responsibilities

- Comply with and promote the Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy,
- Utilise the associated tools and resources and avoid unlawful discrimination.
- Comply with requests for related training attendance and guidance roll out.
- Not help others unlawfully discriminate.
- Co-operate with other procedures and practices that complement this Policy.
- Report any suspected discriminatory actions or harassment taking place, whomever this directly affects.
- Not victimise people because they have made a complaint or have been involved in a complaint of harassment or discrimination.
- Seek guidance on matters of equality and best employment practice when they are unsure.

Service Provider Responsibilities

In our role as a service provider, Focus aims to ensure that our clients and all contacts with whom we have a working relationship in all sectors of the community are treated fairly and with respect and that all dealings are free from racial, sexual and disability discrimination and harassment. We also recognise our liabilities regarding harassment to our employees by any third parties not directly employed by the firm and require suppliers to commit to the same standards as highlighted in this Policy.

Recruitment / Promotion

Our recruitment and promotion process must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job, whether this on a full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal or contract basis. Our focus is on the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and potential of individuals to do their jobs.

We will ensure that our job adverts encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people, through either internal and/or external advertising. All adverts will be carefully worded to ensure that no intent of either direct or indirect discrimination is interpreted nor is there indication of stereotyping of roles. We will clearly state we are an equal opportunities employer.

Job descriptions will properly reflect the responsibilities of the jobholder and person specifications will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.

Selection criteria and procedures are intended to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their individual relevant merit, ability and suitability for the post. Shortlisting and interviewing will normally be carried out by more than one person, to minimise the risk of conscious or unconscious bias.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels and will be fair and non-discriminatory. Interviews will be undertaken with an unbiased approach towards candidates and only questions which relate to the job will be asked.

We will ensure a fair inclusive promotion and development approach. Management will discuss personal development based on individual needs and role requirements and this will be communicated and made available to everyone on a fair and equal basis.

Employment Terms and Conditions

We employ staff from diverse backgrounds, and with a range of long-term conditions that may need support in the workplace via reasonable adjustments. We will ensure that all our employment policies are formulated and applied in such a way as to minimise any discrimination on the grounds of any characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination and to offer any support for any ongoing needs.

Other Considerations

We will not discriminate against individuals who have left our organisation, either by failing to provide references that are based on factual, accurate information or by failing to provide a reference when we would normally do so.

If, during the course of our employment with us, your circumstances change so as to fall under a new protected characteristic, especially where this is an 'unseen' disability or medical condition, we encourage you to share this with us so that we can help support you; we appreciate some health matters such as hormonal issues (menopause, pregnancy/fertility related etc.) or mental health difficulties are common and may present temporary or fluctuating effects, so awareness and regular review can help us support you in managing symptoms or other obstacles and keep you reaching your full potential nonetheless.

We have no fixed retirement age and anyone who wishes to work beyond State Pension Age may choose to do so if still capable of the role. We support development at all stages of your career irrespective of age.

Harassment (sexual or otherwise), discrimination and bullying will not be tolerated. Any individual who feels that they have been subjected to / witnessed bullying or harassment of any kind should refer to the relevant section of the Employee Code of Conduct policy and alert their line manager or other appropriate senior staff member to take steps to address. Formal reporting can be completed via following our standard whistleblowing procedure (from April 2026, Sexual Harassment falls within 'protected disclosure' rules), but we urge you to try to resolve informally via a suitable manager first.

A confidential central log of all alleged incidents will be kept and reviewed to help improve our approach and prevent future incidences.

Any complaint of harassment that may constitute a criminal offence will be discussed with the individual affected to ascertain whether they want to report the matter to the police and what support we can offer them if they go ahead.

Review and Consultation

We will keep this policy under regular review and consult with relevant persons on the effectiveness of this policy. Every attempt will be made to make this a meaningful process and the diversity of contributions to this consultation will be valued by the Practice. The review will be followed by effective action where this is required.

Related Policies

Employee Code of Conduct
Disciplinary Policy
Grievance Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Wellbeing Guidance - Health and Safety Handbook

Monitoring

The effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures will be regularly reviewed by the Partners. Audits will occur at least annually in line with our ISO 9001 practices to monitor any trends, assess current risk and align subconsultant practice.



For Focus Consultants 2010 LLP
Jason Redfearn BSc (Hons) MRICS
Partner
February 2026