



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The Equal Opportunity Policy describes our company commitments as an equal opportunity employer. We focus on promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.

INTERNAL – This document must not be disclosed outside of the QA group of companies without the permission of a Director, Executive Director or the Head of People Services.



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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	4
2.	The Company commitments	4
3.	Our Equal Opportunity Statement	5
4.	Your Responsibilities.....	5
5.	Victimisation, Discrimination and Harassment	6
6.	Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the Company	6
7.	Access to Work	6
8.	Communication of This Policy to Employees	7



1 INTRODUCTION

Our employees come from a range of backgrounds and this means we benefit from alternative viewpoints, perspectives and ideas. We celebrate and encourage this; it makes us strong and supportive.

We aim to create a working environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and are able to make the best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment.

We will not unlawfully discriminate. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 protects against discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

2 THE COMPANY COMMITMENTS

- Accept our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- Appoint, learn, develop and promote employees based on merit and ability.
- Create and use consistent and fair non-discriminatory criteria for the recruitment and selection of employees. We act fairly and reasonably and encourage applicants with any disabilities. We will take into account any reasonable adjustments that may be required. All potential employees are assessed as objectively as possible based on their individual skills and the requirements of the job.
- Provide a means for any employee to raise and address any concerns that they may have about not being treated equally.
- Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against our employees or customers are considered disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under QA's Disciplinary Policy.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. Promote dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.



- Provide training to all existing and new employees through QA365 to help them understand their rights and responsibilities to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. QA will also provide additional training to managers to help them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.
- Make opportunities for training, development, and progression available to all employees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Promote an inclusive environment, without fear of discrimination. This includes employees whose gender identity doesn't match the gender they were assigned at birth and who may identify themselves as transgender (or "trans"), and those who do not identify with being either male or female ("non-binary").
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion.
- We are accredited as 'Disability Confident' and play a role in changing attitudes for the better and helps us be an inclusive employer.

3. Our Equal Opportunity Statement

QA is an equal opportunity employer, focused on promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.

We embrace diversity, welcome applications from all candidates, and aim to support career growth regardless. This means no matter what your gender, age, ethnicity, beliefs or sexual preference, or if you are disabled, we welcome you and the alternative perspectives you bring to our diverse family.

4. Your Responsibilities

All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other employees.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, QA for any act of discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.



5. Victimisation, Discrimination and Harassment

QA's policy is to make sure ANY employee who considers themselves to be a victim of discrimination or harassment, feels free to discuss the problem in confidence with a manager or a member of the People Team.

We view any discriminatory treatment towards another, both within and outside QA as misconduct. Any person found guilty of such behaviour will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary policy.

Employees must be aware that race and sex discrimination includes harassment like comments or insults relating to or resulting from a person's ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation. It can also be simple words or gestures that the individual feels uncomfortable about, such as wolf whistling or telling jokes.

6. Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the Company

QA will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the Company. Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors, or others, to their manager who will take appropriate action.

7. Access to Work

If the help you need at work is not covered by QA making reasonable adjustments, you can get help from Access to Work.

Support can be offered based on your needs, which may include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support in the workplace. Your workplace can include your home if you work from there some or all of the time. An Access to Work grant can pay for:

- special equipment, adaptations or support worker services to help you do things like answer the phone or go to meetings
- help getting to and from work

It will help your application if you've spoken to your employer about reasonable adjustments before you apply for Access to Work. To Apply Online - <https://www.get-disability-work-support.service.gov.uk/apply/clinically-extremely-vulnerable?lang=en> or you can contact Access to Work helpline on 0800 121 7479.



8. Communicating this policy

The People Team is responsible for communicating this policy and the associated processes to all employees which are available on the People Hub.

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be updated should there be any changes in the law.

We are keen to extend our Equal Opportunities Monitoring to allow us to offer additional insights on equality issues within the workforce, e.g. under-representation or imbalances within certain groups. Our HRIS System allows us to monitor and report on this.