

AESP National Equality Framework for UK Organisations

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Further Information	
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Updates and Continuing Improvement	AESP is committed to updating and improving this National Equality Framework
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The AESP National Equality Framework has been developed to help UK organisations identify and manage the elements and what should be included in their equality policies and equality practice. AESP Members and their Standards are assessed and certified to deliver the NEF. AESP members are able to issue Accreditation and Certificates which confirm and that an organisation's policies and practices meet the NEF requirements.

The National Equality Framework contains 8 sections; each section is split into a number of sub-headings.

1. Equality Policy
2. Equality in Employment
3. Equality of Terms and Conditions
4. Equality in Recruitment
5. Equality Responsibilities
6. Equality in Service Delivery
7. External Equality Relationships
8. Other Equality Issues

Accreditation is awarded by qualified AESP Members to Organisations that meet the National Equality Framework requirements.

The Equality Policies and Practices are the responsibility of the Organisation's management. AESP Members are qualified to assess and form an opinion on these Equality Policies and Practices based on audits and reports. Equality Policies and Practices examined in the assessment and accreditation should present fairly, in all material respects, the Equality Policies and Practices of the Organisation at the date of the assessment.

Employers, suppliers and others who have duties under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provisions may have different ways of complying with the Act, this may depend on the size and locations of the organisation and the number of employees it has. While all organisations and employers have the same duties under the Act, the way that these duties are implemented and maintained may vary. Smaller organisation may have fewer written policies, and may be more limited by financial constraints.

The National Equality Framework is designed to provide a foundation of policies and practice for organisations to identify their main responsibilities and to make them aware of any gaps they may need to address. No employer is exempt from these duties because of size. It is not exhaustive and does not cover every issue and is based on the Statutory Codes issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

An organisation can take advice on compliance with the Act from an external organisation such as the AESP Members or they can use the guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Government Equalities Office (GEO).

1. Equality Policy	
	a) Equality ACT 2010
	<p>The Equality Act 2010 updated and strengthened the equality requirements and duties on all organisations and individuals.</p> <p>It is important that you consider how your organisation should behave and manage your responsibilities to your employees, customers, suppliers and the public.</p>
	b) Protected Characteristics
	<p>The Equality Act 2010 identifies 9 Protected Characteristics which are specifically included in the legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Gender reassignment • Marriage and Civil partnership • Pregnancy and maternity • Race • Religion or belief • Sex • Sexual orientation
	c) Equality Policy
	<p>Organisations which are committed to equality and recognise the importance of ensuring equal opportunity and fair treatment in every aspect of their business should have appropriate policies and practices.</p>
d) Managing Implementation	
<p>An Equality Programme needs to be brief and clear, and contain all the information to ensure that it is implemented well.</p>	
e) Raising Awareness	
<p>Organisations should ensure that all staff members and everyone associated with the organisation know about its Equality Policy and the Equality Programme.</p>	

2. Equality in Employment	
	a) Existing Employees
	You should plan and record the various ways in which you manage Equality in Employment for your existing employees.
	b) Equality Training
	Equality Training should be a key element included in the organisation’s Equality Programme.
	c) Access to Training
	Employees should have access to appropriate training.
	d) Performance Reviews
	Organisations should make a simple clear plan of how they will manage the Performance and Reviews of all employees. This should form part of the Equality Programme.
	e) Promotion \ Vacancies
	The Equality Programme should require a well-documented set of processes to manage Promotion \ Vacancies.
f) Dealing with Harassment and Discrimination	
Organisations are legally required to have a written disciplinary and grievance procedure.	
g) Job Description and Person Specification	
When recruiting, your organisation may draw up a detailed job description and person specification for each particular job.	
h) Reasonable Adjustments for Employees	
The duty to make reasonable adjustments is a cornerstone of the Equality Act and requires employers to take positive steps to ensure that disabled people can access and progress in employment.	
i) Work Life Balance	
Flexible working is seen as a benefit which enabled employees to manage their work–life balance. In addition to the personal benefits there is a strong business case.	

3. Equality of Terms and Conditions	
	a) Terms and Conditions
	Organisations should have processes in place to manage Equality of Terms and Conditions.
	b) Pay and Benefits
	An employer must not discriminate in setting terms of employment relating to pay, or in awarding pay increases. This applies to all protected characteristics not just equal pay for men and women equal work.
	c) Equal Pay
	The Equality Act gives women and men the right to equal pay for equal work.
	d) Absence
	Sickness and absence from work may be governed by contractual terms and conditions and/or practices and procedures.
	e) Dress Code
Many employers enforce a dress code or uniform with the aim of ensuring that workers dress in a manner that is appropriate to the business or workplace or to meet health and safety requirements.	
f) Retirement	
From April 2011 the law on age and retirement was amended so as an employer is no longer be able to issue notice of retirement to employees.	
g) Pensions	
Employers may provide benefits to current and former workers and their dependants through occupational pension schemes.	

h) Equality in Recruitment	
	<p>a) Recruitment</p> <p>Organisations should have processes in place to manage Equality in Recruitment</p>
	<p>b) Job Description and Person Specification</p> <p>When recruiting, your organisation may draw up detailed job descriptions and person specifications for each particular job.</p>
	<p>c) Advertising</p> <p>When advertising for staff, your organisation may wish to use local and specialised organisations to help reach people with particular skills and experience.</p>
	<p>d) Job Applications</p> <p>To aid the job application process in your organisation, you may ask all job applicants to fill out your organisation's standard application form or you may allow for the use of CV as the means of determining a candidate's suitability for the first interview.</p>
	<p>e) Short Listing</p> <p>As part of your organisation's working practice, you should ensure that more than one member of staff is involved in short-listing candidates so as to benefit from more than one viewpoint. It is also important for your organisation to ensure that any staff member involved in selection and interview have received guidance or training on your organisation's equality policy, and your organisation's recruitment and selection procedures.</p>
	<p>f) Selection Tests</p> <p>It is important that any selection tests devised by the organisation should only measure the skills and abilities needed for the job, as listed in the job description and person specification.</p>
	<p>g) Interviews</p> <p>Organisations should have processes in place to manage Equality in Recruitment</p>
	<p>h) References</p> <p>It is always good business practice to request references for all candidates.</p>

4. Equality in Recruitment	
	i) Appointments
	Organisations should have processes in place to manage Equality in Recruitment including letters of appointment or rejection
	j) Eligibility to Work
	It is the responsibility of an organisation to make sure the person appointed is eligible to work in the UK

5. Equality Responsibilities	
	a) The Organisation's has responsibilities for Employees and Contractors
	Organisations should have processes in place to manage its Equality Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour of any member of staff in the course of their employment • Providing goods, facilities or services • Contractors or others providing services for your organisation
	b) Employees' Responsibilities
	Any worker employed by your organisation or by your agent may be personally responsible for their own acts
	c) Contractors' Responsibilities
	A Contracting organisation is responsible for the behaviour of any member of their staff, their agents or anyone working on their behalf during the course of their employment.
	d) If you have Contract Workers
	<p>It is unlawful for an organisation or end user to discriminate against or victimise a contract worker or by subjecting the contract worker to any other disadvantage.</p> <p>If they are disabled they are also entitled to have reasonable adjustments made to avoid being put to a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people.</p>

6. Equality in Service Delivery	
	a) Equality in Service Delivery
	<p>Every organisation committed to equality should consider and manage the equality in the services it provides and how it provides them.</p> <p>If your organisation provides goods, facilities or services to members of the public, when you do this, the equality law applies to you. It applies to you if you are providing goods, facilities or services to members of the public as a sub-contractor or supplier on behalf of someone else.</p>
	b) Who the Service Provisions of the Equality Act 2010 applies to
	<p>If your organisation provides goods, facilities or services, to members of the public or as a sub-contractor or as a supplier on behalf of someone else</p>
	c) Service Delivery Policies and Procedures
	<p>You must also ensure that you have your Service Delivery Practices and Processes in place to meet the requirements of the Equality ACT 2010.</p>
	d) Treating People Fairly
	<p>Organisations should have processes in place to manage its Equality in Service Delivery</p>
	e) Staff
	<p>An organisation is responsible for the behaviour of any member of staff in the course of their employment</p>
	f) Sub-contractors, Suppliers and Agents
	<p>An organisation is responsible for the behaviour of contractors or others providing services for your organisation</p>
	g) Communications and Information
	<p>Your organisation is responsible if you provide information.</p>
	h) Personal Responsibility
	<p>Any worker employed by your organisation or by your agent may be personally responsible for their own acts carried out during their employment or while acting with your authority.</p>

6. Equality in Service Delivery	
	i) Reasonable Adjustments/Positive and Active Duty
	Equality law recognises that bringing about equality for disabled people may mean a duty to make reasonable adjustments.
	j) Buildings and Premises
	Your organisation is responsible for the building or other place where you deliver your services if this is open to the public or a section of the public.
	k) Training
	You should ensure that your management, staff, agents, sub-contractors and suppliers are all trained and are all fully aware of your Service Delivery Policies and Practices.

7. External Equality Relationships	
	a) Private Sector Customers
	If your organisation provides goods, facilities or services to members of the public, when you do this, the equality law applies to you. You need to value your customers and respect their diversity by treating them thoughtfully, with fairness and equality.
	b) Public Sector Customers
	If you are currently a Supplier to the Public Sector or want to become a Supplier to the Public Sector or a Sub Contractor in the future you may become subject to the Public Bodies' regulations and contractual requirements.
	c) Equality and Suppliers
Your policy should be to work with all of your suppliers fairly and equally and expect them to practice equality values with the same commitment that you have.	
	d) The Wider Community
	Your policy should be to care about the wider community and to act with consideration and respect for their values.

8. Other Equality Issues	
	a) Equality Risk Assessment
	Equality Impact is a systematic analysis of both your formal or informal policy, whether that policy has been documented, or is in an informal state, or is about to be documented.
	b) Monitoring
	Use Monitoring as an aid to review and improvement
	c) Positive Action
	Positive action means the steps that you can take as an employer to address the different needs or past track record of disadvantage or low participation of a people who share a particular protected characteristic.

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