

Equality & Diversity Policy

Prepared by	René Morency
Approved by	John Beck
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1. Introduction

Browser is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our commitment:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all.
- No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression on equal opportunities are available to all staff.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and/or employee representatives.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the management.

2. Diversity in the workplace

We aim to enhance and develop our current processes and strategies and strive to use new and innovative ways to continue promoting equal opportunities.

In order to embed the importance of diversity and inclusion into our business, we meet annually to discuss and review the policy, with an agenda for improvement created thereafter. We also provide in-house training, development and progression on equal opportunities to our new starters, and as

refreshers for all employees. This includes what equal opportunities means to us as a business and in the day-to-day running of the business.

Our recruitment and selection processes are competency based. We use external resources to improve objectivity, selecting on merit, achievement and suitability, providing the most suitable individuals for the roles available. We also encourage diversity through our work with clients and charities we support.

3. Your involvement and keeping informed

Whilst all training and employment opportunities will be offered strictly on merit, we will encourage underrepresented groups to apply for these opportunities within our company.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups.

People who work for and with Browser or who use Browser's services are integral to making our vision of equality and diversity a reality. This includes:

- Playing an active role in equality and diversity and engagement working groups.
- Taking part in training exercises so that staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to understand and meet the needs of colleagues and service users.
- Participating in and promoting staff network groups that have been set up to add value to our equality and diversity policy.
- Making a commitment to be involved and become a diversity champion.

4. What is discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination: less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: where a provision, criterion or practice is applied to all staff but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others, and is not justified.

- Harassment: 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. This includes sexual harassment.
- Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- Discrimination arising from disability: where a disabled person is treated unfavourably not because of their disability but something arising in consequence of it.

5. Responsibilities of all staff

This policy applies to all staff working for us including employees, agency and casual workers, and self-employed contractors. All staff are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. Staff must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former staff members, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, or visitors.

This responsibility applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events. This applies in relation to face-to-face behaviour as well as communications by phone, email, social media, and other electronic means. It applies to written, verbal and non-verbal conduct such as disseminating offensive pictures.

6. Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal. Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

7. If you have a concern

If you have a concern and believe you are being discriminated against, you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. Explain the situation and how it has made you feel. It

can be helpful to describe the event so the other person is clear about your concerns. Use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behaviour. Alternatively you may speak to your line manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you do not feel that informal steps are appropriate, or they have been unsuccessful, you should raise the matter formally under our grievance procedure.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance procedure. If we consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been discriminated against we will consider the appropriate action to take. If the person accused is an employee, this may include invoking our disciplinary procedure. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.