

Responsibility:	Managing Director	Date doc. created:	V2 February 2022
Print name sign off:	Simon Little, Managing Director	Last review date of doc:	March 2026
Signature:	Simon Little	Next review date:	March 2027

Owner and version control

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

1. Scope and Purpose of this Policy

Best Practice Network is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, fostering inclusivity, and eliminating discrimination in all aspects of its work. We strive to create an environment where all individuals—including staff, associates, learners, apprentices, employers, trainees, visitors, and job applicants—are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

This policy applies to all individuals working with or for Best Practice Network, irrespective of their role or contractual status. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Senior leaders (Managing Director, Directors, and the Senior Leadership Team)
- Employees, consultants, contractors, freelancers, associates, and home-workers
- Trainees, apprentices, and partner employers
- Part-time, fixed-term, voluntary, agency, and temporary staff
- Learners, visitors, job applicants, and external partners/suppliers

All individuals are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its principles.

This document provides guidance and does not form part of any employment contract. Best Practice Network reserves the right to amend this policy as required.

2. Equality Statement

At Best Practice Network, we believe that diversity strengthens our organisation. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

Our commitment extends to ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged due to:

- Age
- Disability (including physical, mental health, and neurodiverse conditions such as autism or ADHD)

- Gender reassignment, gender identity, or expression (including non-binary and gender-fluid individuals)
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief (including cultural observances)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic background (recognising barriers related to class or social mobility)
- Intersectional identities (e.g. compounded discrimination faced by individuals with multiple protected characteristics)

Best Practice Network is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable working environment where all individuals—including Staff, Associates, Learners, Apprentices, and Employers—can thrive, free from discrimination or harassment. Decisions within our organisation are based solely on merit, ensuring fairness and equal opportunity for all.

3. Legal Compliance

We adhere to relevant UK legislation including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 2013 & 2020
- ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
- DBS Code of Practice

Where applicable, we have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We aim to meet WCAG 2.2 standards for digital accessibility where reasonably practicable.

4. Commitment to and Promotion of the Policy

Best Practice Network (BPN) is dedicated to upholding the principles outlined in this policy. We ensure that all staff—including employees, freelancers, contractors, and associates—understand its requirements and their obligations under it. Commitment to this policy is formally incorporated into employment contracts and freelance agreements.

To reinforce our commitment to equality and diversity, we provide regular training, updates, and briefings to all staff and associates on best practices.

All candidates, trainees, and apprentices enrolled in BPN programmes receive access to this policy via their programme handbooks. It is integrated into the induction process and actively discussed in relevant meetings to ensure awareness and compliance.

5. Responsibilities

All individuals covered by this policy must:

- Comply with UK equality law and BPN's policies, treating colleagues with dignity and respect
- Challenge discrimination or harassment and report breaches in line with grievance procedures
- Lead by example, ensuring their teams adhere to this policy and promote BPN's equality objectives where applicable

BPN will provide mandatory equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training, including updates on fair recruitment practices under the Equality Act 2010. Training will be refreshed annually via online modules.

6. Policy Commitments

Best Practice Network is committed to:

- Fostering an inclusive and equitable working environment
- Ensuring decisions are based solely on merit
- Preventing discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Making reasonable adjustments where required

How We Implement This in Practice

To ensure this policy is effectively embedded, BPN will:

- Provide regular and mandatory EDI training, including unconscious bias
 - Embed EDI into induction, training, and appraisal processes
 - Monitor recruitment, progression, and achievement data
 - Use staff and learner feedback to inform improvements
 - Monitor complaints and safeguarding concerns
 - Take action where inequality or underrepresentation is identified
-

7. Forms of Discrimination

At Best Practice Network, discrimination—whether by or against staff, associates, learners, apprentices, or employers—is strictly prohibited unless a specific legal exemption applies.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination arises when a policy or practice places individuals at a disadvantage unless objectively justified.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct that violates dignity or creates an offensive or hostile environment.

Victimisation

Unfair treatment because an individual has raised or supported a complaint.

Intersectionality

Best Practice Network recognises that discrimination can be compounded when individuals hold multiple protected characteristics.

Microaggressions & Unconscious Bias

Microaggressions are not acceptable and will be addressed through education or disciplinary action where appropriate.

Gender Identity & Inclusion

Gender identity and expression are respected, including use of appropriate pronouns and inclusive practice.

8. Recruitment and Selection

Best Practice Network is committed to ensuring that no applicant faces discrimination.

Recruitment procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure individuals are assessed solely on merit and ability.

Advertising & Applications

- Advertisements will avoid discriminatory language
- Equal opportunities information available on request

Health & Disability

Health-related questions will only be asked where legally permitted.

Right to Work

All applicants must provide appropriate documentation in line with UK law.

Monitoring

Monitoring data may be collected anonymously to support equality and diversity improvements.

9. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Best Practice Network is committed to safeguarding and uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where appropriate.

Having a criminal record does not automatically disqualify a candidate. Decisions are based on relevance, circumstances, and role requirements.

Disclosures are handled confidentially and fairly in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice.

10. Training, Promotions and Conditions of Service

Staff training needs will be identified through appraisal processes. All employees will have access to appropriate training and development.

Promotions will be awarded based on merit.

BPN will review workforce composition and progression to ensure equality of opportunity.

11. Disability, Mental Health & Inclusion

BPN is committed to supporting individuals with disabilities and will consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Adjustments may include flexible working, workspace changes, or tailored communication methods.

12. Employment Types

Fixed-term and Agency Workers

BPN will monitor use and conditions to ensure fair treatment.

Part-time Workers

Part-time employees will receive equal access to opportunities and benefits.

13. Termination of Employment

Redundancy and disciplinary processes will be conducted fairly and in accordance with relevant legislation and ACAS guidance.

14. Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment or Victimisation

All complaints will be treated seriously.

Concerns may be raised with line managers or SEG People.

Complaints will be handled confidentially and investigated appropriately.

Individuals raising concerns in good faith will not be victimised.

15. Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

BPN will monitor equality data and review outcomes regularly.

Findings will be used to improve practice and promote equality.

16. Related Policies

- Grievance Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Recruitment Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Flexible Working Policy
-

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.