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## Introduction

At Bytes Software Services (Bytes/Company), we are dedicated to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within our workforce. The Company maintains a zero-tolerance policy to unlawful discrimination, ensuring each claim is handled with utmost support and confidentiality. Any breaches will result in disciplinary action to uphold company standards and drive continuous improvement.

Bytes aims to reflect all sections of society and our customers within the team, fostering an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and empowered to reach their full potential. Additionally, we strive to prevent discrimination against customers and the public, believing this approach is both good practice and a sound business strategy. Supporting documentation is provided alongside this policy.

## Purpose

By fostering an inclusive environment, Bytes aims to drive innovation, enhance employee satisfaction and strengthen customer relations. This Policy ensures everyone understands their rights and responsibilities in maintaining a positive and ethical workplace. We value individual contributions, emphasise dignity and respect, and cultivate an empowering environment. We recognise that diversity within our workforce brings a broader range of perspectives and ideas, improves decision-making, and helps us better understand and meet the needs of our diverse customer base.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all employees and managers, including temporary, part-time and full-time staff, as well as subcontractors. It is communicated to employees via Compass and is available to the public upon request via the Company Website. Our commitment extends to our suppliers, communicated through our Code of Conduct during their onboarding process. We expect our suppliers to uphold the same values, promoting an inclusive and non-discriminative supply chain.

## Policy

### Terms of Reference

<b>Equality</b>	Fair treatment and equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of background or characteristics.
<b>Diversity</b>	Valuing and embracing differences among employees, fostering respect and inclusion.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Ensuring all employees feel valued, respected and supported, with equal access to opportunities.
<b>Discrimination</b>	Unfair treatment based on characteristics like race, gender or age, undermining equality and inclusivity.

<b>Bullying</b>	Repeated, unreasonable behaviour that risks health and safety, such as verbal abuse and intimidation.
<b>Harassment</b>	Unwelcome behaviour that demeans or intimidates based on characteristics like race or gender.
<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	Unwanted sexual conduct creating an intimidating or offensive environment.
<b>Misconduct</b>	Inappropriate behaviour violating company rules, leading to disciplinary action.

## Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

- Prohibit unlawful discrimination based on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: 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.
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment, including pay, benefits, terms and conditions, grievances, discipline, dismissal, redundancy, parental leave, flexible working requests, and opportunities for employment, promotion, training and development.

## Harassment and Misconduct

- Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic, is a criminal offence.
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

## Reporting Process

Please refer to 'POL039 – Speak Up Policy' for details on the confidential reporting mechanism for non-inclusive incidents that conflict with Bytes' EDI Policy.

## Training and Development

- Conduct regular, mandatory training sessions for all employees on inclusive language and behaviour, clearly outlining Bytes' expectations and unacceptable conduct.
- Encourage participation in events and discussions to foster diversity conversations.
- Career development is available to all staff, encouraging them to progress and reach their full potential, ensuring their talents and resources are fully utilised to maximise organisational efficiency.
- Base decisions concerning staff on merit, except where necessary exemptions and exceptions under the Equality Act apply.

## Review and Monitoring

- Regularly review employment practices and procedures to identify and address issues, implement improvements and ensure fairness. Update the EDI Policy to reflect these changes and any new legal requirements. Conduct annual reviews to evaluate the policy's effectiveness and act on any identified issues.
- Monitor the composition of the workforce, including factors such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability. This helps promote equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring alignment with the policy's aims and commitments.

## Implementation

- Senior Management fully supports the EDI Policy, which has been agreed upon with employee and HR representatives.
- Employees receive details of grievance and disciplinary procedures upon starting, including whom to contact (usually their line manager).
- Using these procedures does not affect the right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of alleged discrimination.
- Actions range from verbal warnings to mandatory training, and in severe cases, termination.
- Feedback on the policy and its implementation can be provided through HR, Employee Resource Groups, and the Company eForm/chat bot (currently Ask Keith).

## Lines of Responsibility

<b>Managing Director</b>	Demonstrate a strong commitment to EDI principles, setting the tone for the Company.
<b>Head of HR</b>	Take complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination seriously, whether from employees, customers, suppliers, visitors or the public. Conduct regular training sessions for all employees and maintain records of all reported complaints, investigations and actions taken to ensure accountability.
<b>Managers/Line Managers</b>	Ensure teams read, understand and adhere to this Policy. Managers should advocate for employees who report incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination, and encourage open communication to address any concerns or incidents.
<b>Staff</b>	Expected to promote equal opportunities and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. They should familiarise themselves with this Policy during each annual review. Both employees and the organisation can be held liable for any of these acts against fellow employees, customers, suppliers or the public. Staff are also encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness of policies and suggest improvements.

## Supporting Documentation

- Speak Up Policy - [POL039 - Speak Up Policy.pdf](#)
- Staff Handbook - [POL065 - Staff Handbook.pdf](#)
- Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy - [POL066 - Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy.pdf](#)
- Sexual Harassment Policy - [POL067 - Sexual Harrasment.pdf](#)