

Statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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1. Introduction

The principles of equality and fair treatment have always been fundamental to an inclusive and progressive society. These principles should also be reflected in and outside the workplace.

We expect everyone at Zircon and BeTalent (collectively referred to as 'ZBeT', 'we', 'us', 'our') to treat everyone decently and with respect. We are committed to ensuring a work environment which is free from harassment, victimisation and bullying. Processes followed should be open, fair and transparent, and decisions should be based on sound, objective criteria. There should be equality of opportunity and treatment, and everyone should be able to work in an atmosphere in which they can develop professionally and use their abilities to their full potential.

An employer must not discriminate against employees or job applicants, in respect of the nine 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marital or civil partnership status.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

Employers should not take any of the above protected characteristics into account when making recruitment or employment decisions, with limited exceptions for disability (see section 4 below). This means that they cannot, for example:

- Decide that they prefer a woman (or a man) for a post.
- Decide not to appoint an applicant because she is pregnant.
- Treat a person less favourably in any way due to their sexual orientation.
- Fail to appoint the best person for the job, due to their age (young or old).

There is additional legislation that prohibits discrimination against other groups:

- Part-time status (Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000).
- Fixed-term status (Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002).
- Equal Pay between men and women (Equal Pay Act 1970).

2. Purpose

ZBeT is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and inclusive working environment for our employees. We aim to create opportunities and reduce barriers for everyone, particularly under-represented groups. We are committed to making sure there is no unjustified discrimination in our processes for recruitment and selection, performance management and pay, and that promotion and retention is fairly granted across all our operations.

When we talk about equality, diversity and inclusion, it's with an understanding that these are separate but interlinked issues, which may need different approaches.

- **Equality** means making sure that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. It means challenging discrimination and removing barriers, so that everyone has opportunities to achieve their desired outcomes.
- **Diversity** is about recognising the benefits of different values, abilities, and perspectives, and celebrating people's differences. This means promoting an environment that welcomes and values diverse backgrounds, thinking, skills and experience.
- **Inclusion** is providing a space where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, and where everyone feels valued and accepted. Everyone should be able to contribute and have a voice. This may mean making reasonable adjustments to facilitate participation.

We aim to be:

- **A diverse company.** We want to attract the very best candidates, at all levels, regardless of race, gender, age, physical ability, religion or sexual orientation. We do not set specific, numerical targets for recruitment or promotion of particular groups, but we place great emphasis on ensuring that the pool of applicants for our jobs is diverse.
- **A fair company.** Where pay, retention, promotions and redundancies are determined without discrimination.
- **An inclusive company.** A company, which uses inclusivity and diversity to help achieve our commercial goals and targets new opportunities in growing markets.

Our goals are to have fairness at the heart of everything we do and to be at least the best in our industry for equal opportunity. When we say 'diversity', we mean we have a workforce and client base where differences are valued and respected as an essential part of a successful future at ZBeT. To be the best we can be, we need the widest range of minds and imaginations from the widest range of backgrounds right across the company: in every business; in every country; in every job. That's why inclusivity within the company is a high priority. And the more global we become the more essential it is that we value, and understand, what makes us different. In order to achieve these goals we utilize the following:

- Our assessment tools undergo extensive international review to ensure wide applicability and fairness to all groups. We are transparent with candidates offering clarity of instruction and detailed feedback. For candidates who have little or no experience of assessment we

provide knowledge to enable them to compete effectively and fairly.

- We integrate multiple perspectives into our research, idea generation, consultation and decision-making processes, thus increasing the probability of greater fairness, creativity and innovation in all our outcomes.
- In assessing and developing people for our clients, diversity simply makes good business sense. In order to look beyond boundaries, we acknowledge the unique contribution that all potential candidates and existing employees can bring in terms of their culture, ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, experiences, opinions and beliefs.

We have also made the following commitments:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contribution of all team members are recognised and valued.
- To not tolerate any form of unacceptable behaviour, harassment, discrimination, bullying (including cyber bullying) or victimisation in any area of employment or in the provision of our services to our clients.
- To provide guidance and training to employees, contractors, partners and associates on diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity.
- To encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to or witnessed discrimination to raise their concerns with their manager, an Employee Forum or Trade Union representative.
- To make every person aware of their personal responsibility for implementing and promoting equal opportunities in their day-to-day dealings with people and encourage employees to treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- To regularly review all our employment practices, policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this statement.
- To monitor the effectiveness of our commitment to diversity and inclusion and the supporting policies and procedures at least annually.

We require all of our employees to recognise these commitments and act in accordance with them. In addition, we will comply with all relevant legislation and good practice.

No individual will be unjustly discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3 Dealing with discrimination

Unacceptable behaviour, harassment, discrimination, bullying (including cyber bullying) or victimisation of any individual is perceived as contradictory to our aspirations for a supportive working environment and will not be tolerated. Any allegations of such behaviour will be investigated, and ultimately disciplined, in accordance with our Code of Conduct, and Equality and Diversity Policy.

4 Some important distinctions

Situations where equality law is different

There are a small number of circumstances where equality law applies differently. Notably, if you can show that a protected characteristic is central to a job, you can stipulate that only someone who has that protected characteristic will be considered. This is known as an 'occupational requirement.'

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has further information on when equality law may be different.

If an occupational requirement is to be applied to a job, this must be stated in the recruitment advertisement.

If you are in doubt about when and whether it is appropriate to apply an occupational requirement, you are advised to seek advice.

Positive action

It is possible to take positive action to encourage people from certain groups to apply to work for you, where there is historical under-representation in a job.

For example, you might state in a recruitment advertisement that you encourage disabled people or people from a certain gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or religion/belief to apply.

All positive action must stop as soon as a vacancy is advertised. It is then up to each individual to apply for that job and to be appointed on their own merit.

Positive discrimination

'Positive discrimination' (e.g. recruiting someone **because** they have a protected characteristic) is unlawful in most circumstances in the UK, apart from one circumstance defined in the Equality Act 2010.

If, during the recruitment process, you have two equally qualified candidates who have scored the same in the selection process, you can, if you wish, select the successful candidate on the grounds that they are from an under-represented or disadvantaged group. It should be stressed that this is a voluntary, rather than mandatory process. Anecdotal evidence indicates that it is used infrequently, as it is relatively rare that two candidates are absolutely equal.

Unconscious bias

Everyone has unconscious bias and it can influence our decisions in an unhelpful and potentially discriminatory way. If you want to develop your own awareness and appreciation of unconscious bias,

you may wish to review the [Acas resources](#).

5 Disabled applicants and employees

Definition of disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability (and is therefore protected by the Act) if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment; and
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial.
- 'Long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months.
- 'Normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

Individuals who have cancer, MS or HIV /AIDS are automatically protected under the Act.

Applicants for employment

Reasonable adjustments should be made as needed, to enable disabled applicants for employment to access the selection process.

We should not ask direct questions about disability at interview stage, but we should ask all candidates questions which relate to the **essential** requirements of the job. For example, 'are you able to climb stairs?' is acceptable if this is required for the job.

Our selection decision should be based on the individual's ability to do the job, with reasonable adjustments as needed. For example, if a candidate cannot climb stairs but is otherwise the best person for the job, we will need to consider whether we can reasonably adjust the job so that there is no requirement to climb stairs.

Employees with disabilities

As an employer, we have certain **legal obligations** under the Equality Act 2010 towards an employee who has a disability or who acquires a disability during employment.

If our employee is disabled under the Equality Act, we have a **duty** to make 'reasonable adjustments', for example to the workplace or working arrangements, to avoid the employee being substantially disadvantaged compared to non-disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments may include things like:

- Providing practical aids and technical equipment
- Allocating to another employee some tasks that cannot be done easily by the disabled employee
- A phased return to work after absence due to disability – perhaps working flexible hours or part-time.

The law recognises that what may be ‘reasonable’ as an adjustment for a large employer may not be possible for a smaller employer. Nevertheless, we should implement any adjustments that **are** reasonable, in consultation with the employee. We should take specialist occupational health advice if needed.

Even if our employee does not fall under the legal definition of ‘disabled’, but would benefit from some adjustments that are reasonable to make, then it is good practice and the right thing to do, to make such adjustments.

9. Document history

9.1. Revision history

This document is subject to Change Control and as such any amendments must be carried out through the Document Change Management process and all Approvers must agree to the amendments. This document will update as and when required, and in any case, on an annual basis

Date of this revision 01/08/2022 Date of next review 01/08/2023

Version Number	Revision Date	Change History	Changes Marked	Updated By
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V1.8.22	01/08/2022	Amended name and version number. Re-formatted. Content amended to reflect best industry practices.	yes	Sarah Linton, Talal Malik

9.2. Reviewers

This document requires to be reviewed by the following reviewers.

Name	Title	Review date
Sarah Linton, Stu Scott Davies, Rhys Connolly	COO, IT Director, Strategic Client Partner.	02/08/2021
Sarah Linton, Stu Scott Davies	COO, IT Director	15/08/2022

9.3. Approvers

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Title	Approved date
Sarah Linton, Stu Scott Davies, Rhys Connolly	COO, IT Director, Strategic Client Partner.	02/08/2021
Sarah Linton, Stu Scott Davies	COO, IT Director	15/08/2022

9.4. Distribution list

Once complete, this document will be distributed to:

All interested parties.