

A01. EQUALITY POLICY (JUNE 2023)

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out REDRESS's policy commitment to tackling all forms of discrimination and inequality, and set out positive changes and procedures which will promote equality and prevent all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

REDRESS is a rights-based organisation, and equality and non-discrimination are internationally recognised human rights and values. REDRESS is aware of its responsibility to promote these rights and values, both within its organisation and beyond it. REDRESS recognises that issues of equality and diversity intersect with other forms of oppression based on unequal power relations which are felt throughout society, including amongst our employees, volunteers, partners, survivors and clients.

REDRESS also recognises that international human rights law practice is not as diverse as it should be, and that we have a responsibility to contribute to addressing those under-representations and under-lying discriminations wherever we are able to do so.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff employed by REDRESS.
- Associated personnel while they are engaged with work or visits related to REDRESS, which includes but is not limited to: trustees, consultants, volunteers, interns, and contractors.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Under UK and Dutch law, it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics". Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The UK Equality Act 2010 uses a definition of disability which includes but is not limited to those with physical or mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (AD(H)D), certain medical conditions, mental health conditions, autistic spectrum conditions, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)/myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) and other disabilities that may be 'unseen' (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, heart conditions, diabetes).

It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. In addition, REDRESS has an obligation to consider and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

POLICY COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Policy commitments

REDRESS will take positive steps to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identities/expressions and gender reassignment, age, HIV status, disability, marriage and civil

partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, class, nationality, national origin, economic status, religion or belief.

Our aim is:

- a) To ensure that clients, survivors, and partners are not discriminated against in their access to the services which REDRESS offers.
- b) To ensure that all employees and job applicants have equal opportunity.
- c) To ensure that REDRESS is as representative as possible of all sections of society (taking account of the size of REDRESS).
- d) To ensure that those with lived experience of torture are represented at REDRESS.
- e) To ensure that each employee is respected and valued and able to give their best as a result.
- f) To strengthen efforts to promote equality and diversity in REDRESS.
- g) To define and communicate clear commitments and consistent messages within REDRESS and with others.

With regard to disability, our aim is to:

- h) Create a positive and inclusive environment for staff, clients and visitors with a disability or long-term condition, both seen and unseen.
- i) Outline the process by which individuals can share a disability and be supported through a process of implementing and reviewing reasonable adjustments.
- j) Provide a framework to contribute to the ongoing development of an enabling environment by addressing some of the specific practical needs of people with disabilities and providing support.

REDRESS commits itself:

- a) To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all team members are recognised and valued.
- b) To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every staff member, associated personnel, client, survivor, and partner, where necessary, adjusting our policies and working practices accordingly.
- c) Not to tolerate any form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to discipline those that breach this policy.
- d) To ensure training, development, and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- e) To promote equality and diversity in the workplace, which (in addition to being a legal requirement) is also good management practice and will benefit the organisation.
- f) To encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so that corrective measures can be taken, where necessary.
- g) To ensure that staff and associated personnel treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- h) To review regularly all our employment practices and procedures.
- i) To make all reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of access to employment, volunteering opportunities, and services.
- j) To avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Responsibility

All staff and associated personnel hold equal responsibility for implementing and upholding this policy. Everyone has a responsibility to:

- a) Challenge any behaviour that could be interpreted as discrimination.
- b) Promote an environment where all can contribute without discrimination.
- c) Not discriminate against clients or colleagues (employees, volunteers and trustees).

KEY PROCEDURES

Ensuring compliance

REDRESS will inform all staff and associated personnel at the commencement of their engagement with REDRESS of the equality policy and that they are obliged to comply with its requirements to promote fairness in our working environment. REDRESS will provide training on the policy (see paragraph 0 below). The policy will also be drawn to the attention of job applicants, and, where necessary, to donors, partners, and clients.

It is the responsibility of Senior Management to ensure that all REDRESS employees and volunteers understand and comply with this Policy, and to decide what action to take with regard to any alleged breaches (whether reported or not). The board of trustees is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

If any staff or associated personnel consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, they can use the grievance procedure to make a complaint on behalf of themselves or another (See A6: Grievance Policy). If external stakeholders consider that there has been discrimination, they can use the Complaints process (See A13: Complaints Policy). REDRESS will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds.

If, after a reasonable and proportionate investigation, Senior Management take the view that staff or associated personnel are in breach of this Policy, action should be taken to address the breach. This could include disciplinary action taken in accordance with the disciplinary policy (see A7: Disciplinary Policy).

Clients or survivors considered to be acting in a discriminatory manner to other clients or members of staff will have this Policy explained to them and their behaviour challenged in a respectful and appropriate manner. If they continue to engage in discriminatory behaviour, (a) they may be asked to leave the premises if it is believed their actions limit the ability of others to access services, or place other people at risk in any way, and/or (b) consider whether we should stop representing that client, in accordance with our letter of engagement.

Equal opportunities

Specific requirements in job descriptions and person specifications will be limited to those that are necessary for the effective performance of the role. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where absolutely necessary.

Volunteering opportunities (such as internships) will be governed by the same principles as those set out in paragraph 0 above.

REDRESS will consider any possible indirect discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place

at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices. REDRESS will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

REDRESS has made a series of changes to its recruitment practice to encourage diversity, including:

- a) We encourage more people to apply for positions by considering job-sharing and part-time work for those unable to work regular hours.
- b) We advertise more widely to attract diverse candidates for staff positions and trustee positions. Consideration is given to which media is used for advertising to ensure that applications from under-represented groups are not excluded or limited but rather are actively encouraged.
- c) We have developed an interview methodology structured around the same questions, and a standard system used to assess each applicant's skills, experience and attributes against the position's requirements.
- d) We have introduced a funded summer internship programme to provide opportunities for lawyers and activists to get experience at a human rights NGO.
- e) We take positive action to favour a job applicant from an under-represented group, where two candidates are 'as qualified as' each other.
- f) We consider the diversity of the board of trustees whenever trustees are recruited, including the representation of torture survivors on the board of trustees.

In addition, REDRESS has developed a practice to carefully consider the diversity of invited speakers at all its events and training, and strives to ensure a range of gender and other forms of representation wherever possible. In particular, REDRESS does not organise all-male panels, and seeks to avoid participating in them, given continued under-representation of women in senior positions in human rights and international law.

All decisions about the selection of cases, partners, or projects will be made fairly and with respect to the views and needs of all involved. Access to services will not be rejected on the basis of the characteristics set out in paragraph 0 above.

Monitoring

Staff members, associated personnel, clients, and job applicants may be asked for information or to complete a form denoting their ethnicity, age, religion, status as disabled, or sexual orientation or gender status. REDRESS guarantees that this information will only be used for the purposes of equalities monitoring. No information will be distributed internally or externally, except for anonymised information used for the express purposes of monitoring.

POSITIVE CHANGES TO BE INTRODUCED

REDRESS recognises the risk that disadvantaged groups may not have equal access to **recruitment opportunities** in the human rights sector. REDRESS will therefore:

- a) Encourage international recruitment by developing a reserve fund that can be used to offer relocation grants to candidates who are successful in their applications for permanent positions.
- b) Budget for paid Legal Assistants rather than unfunded interns to support the work of the charity.
- c) Maximise diversity in its staff recruitment panels.

In addition, REDRESS will:

- a) Deliver the recommendations of the disability audit, including (i) ensuring our offices are fully accessible, (ii) developing specific proposals for recruitment policies that are disability inclusive, and (iii) delivering staff training on working with colleagues with disabilities.
- b) Establish annual equality and diversity training for staff and associated personnel.
- c) Having developed diversity auditing for recruitment, we will deliver a staff diversity audit to provide a baseline comparison.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Staff should be aware of the following associated policies.

- A2: Dignity at Work Policy
- A5: Whistleblowing Policy
- A6: Grievance Policy
- A7: Disciplinary Policy
- A8: Safeguarding Policy
- A13: Complaints Policy

TRAINING

All staff and associated personnel will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. REDRESS keeps a training record that identifies who was trained on what date.

A refresher training session is conducted for all staff at least annually to remind them of the policy and to inform them of any changes.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy was initially approved by the Board of Trustees on 16 February 2021. A revised policy was reviewed by the Risk Committee in June 2023 and approved by the Board on 25 July 2023.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years to ensure that equality and diversity is continually promoted in our working environment. The policy is subject to revision at any time REDRESS considers it necessary to improve it.

In any event, it will be reviewed again in November 2025.

FORMS

- None