

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



The Steri-Pod Group is committed to a policy of equality opportunity in its employment practices. It strives to ensure that its workforce is truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other HR guidance and policies (all available to The Steri-Pod Group employees).

This policy has been written in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and ACAS guidelines on delivering equality and diversity.

Responsibilities

This policy applies to all Steri-Pod Group employees, Fellows and Members and anyone acting on behalf of The Steri-Pod Group.

1. All employees and Steri-Pod Group representatives

All employees and anyone acting on behalf of The Steri-Pod Group are responsible for adhering to this policy. They are required to:

- Support an equal opportunities culture
- Treat all colleagues with courtesy and respect
- Cooperate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity
- Report any discriminatory acts or practices

2. Managers

It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure this policy is implemented. Managers are required to:

- Set examples and standards of behaviour in the workplace
- Ensure their staff are familiar with this policy
- Deal with any unacceptable behaviour in their teams and make it clear to staff that such behaviour will not be tolerated
- Deal with any complaints and breaches of this policy promptly and effectively (in all such cases contact Human Resources)

3. Human Resources

HR are responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance to managers on all matters relating equal opportunities
- Providing advice and support to staff
- Ensuring equality is an integral part of all employment practices, including recruitment, performance management, promotion, learning and development

Discrimination

The Steri-Pod Group aims to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate because of so called 'protected characteristics', i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, including:

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



- Direct discrimination – treating someone less favourably because they have a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – when applying a certain policy or rule to everyone disadvantages someone with a protected characteristic
- Discrimination by association – discriminating against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic
- Discrimination by perception – discriminating against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic
- Victimisation – when someone suffers a detriment because they have made a complaint, raised a grievance or have given evidence in relation to discrimination

Bullying and harassment

The Steri-Pod Group views bullying and harassment as morally, legally and professionally unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Any allegations into bullying and harassment will be fully investigated and an appropriate action will be taken under the disciplinary or grievance policy if necessary.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient (ACAS).

Harassment is an unwanted behaviour, perceived as demeaning and unacceptable by the recipient.

Bullying and harassment are not determined by the intention of the person carrying out the action but by the effect they have on the recipient.

Bullying and harassment can often be hard to recognise. Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another. Examples of behaviour which does constitute bullying or harassment include:

- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Unwelcome sexual advance – touching, inappropriate comments, standing too close, display of offensive materials, etc.
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- Humiliation – e.g. reprimanding someone in front of other staff when this should be done in private
- Persistent placing of excessive demands, setting unrealistic work targets
- Unfair treatment
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by constant criticism

While any instances of bullying and harassment will not be tolerated, it is important to note that as part of their role, the managers may:

- Give constructive feedback regarding work performance on a regular basis
- Address under-performance or unacceptable behaviour
- Issue reasonable instructions and expect staff to carry them out
- Set clear and reasonable objectives for staff and monitor their progress
- Set standards of workplace performance and behaviours

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



Carrying out these functions does not constitute an act of bullying or harassment, although some staff may feel stressed or anxious while the procedures are ongoing. However, abusing these procedures may constitute bullying or harassing behaviour.

Employment practices

Recruitment and selection

The Steri-Pod Group welcomes applications from all sections of community. It follows fair and consistent processes, in which recruitment decisions are made based on the abilities, merits and qualifications of the candidates. Please refer to 'Recruitment Policy and Procedure' (on the RCOG intranet) for further guidance on the recruitment and selection process.

Learning, development and performance review

The main principles of performance management and learning and development at The Steri-Pod Group are:

- Ensuring equal opportunity of access to all forms of learning and development activity offered by The Steri-Pod Group
- Ensuring that diversity and equal opportunities issues are addressed fairly and equitably in all management-related courses
- Allowing staff opportunities for promotion and career progression within the organisation depending on job related competencies, qualifications, abilities and experience, in accordance with the future needs of The Steri-Pod Group
- Ensuring that all employees have regular performance reviews, in which they receive constructive feedback and have an opportunity to discuss their development needs
- Ensuring that all relevant meetings, including performance reviews, are correctly documented

Complaints

Any member of staff or person working at The Steri-Pod Group or applying for a post in The Steri-Pod Group who consider they have received unequal treatment or suffered from bullying or harassment, may make a complaint to their manager or the Human Resources representative.

Policy Review

This policy has immediate effect and replaces all previous versions. This policy will be reviewed and amended, as necessary. The Steri-Pod Group is committed to continual improvement.

Issue No. 2	Date effected: 1/12/18	Approved By: NB	Page: 1 of 3
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