

Equality and Diversity

Promoting a culture that actively values difference

Contents

1	Purpose	2
2	The Definition of Equality and Diversity	2
3	Scope	3
4	Policy Statement	3
5	Implementation	4
6	Employment	5
7	Training	5
8	Responsibility	6
9	Responding to feedback	6
10	Work/life balance	6
11	Discrimination	7
12	Complaints of Discrimination	8
13	People Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility	8
14	Communication	9
15	Monitoring	9
	Associated Policies	



1. Purpose

1.1. The aim of the policy is to ensure

- fair recruitment and selection
- equal access to training opportunities
- equitable terms and conditions of employment
- appropriate provision of services for different sections of the community

1.2. Energy Specifics Ltd is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. Energy Specifics Ltd aims to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected, and built upon, with the ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves. Within this framework Energy Specifics Ltd specifically refers to measures it has in place to provide equality of opportunity and the facilities that it can provide to its diverse workforce and job applicants.

1.3. Energy Specifics Ltd is also committed to compliance with relevant equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and relevant best practice guidance. This policy pursues and builds on the statutory position to ensure effective policies and practice of promoting equality.

1.4. Energy Specifics Ltd aims to pro-actively tackle discrimination or disadvantage and aims to ensure that no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated against for any reason with regard to employment or accessing its services.

1.5. However, Energy Specifics Ltd is also mindful of the provision in discrimination law for the rare circumstances when an organisation may need to justify discrimination rather than have a disproportionate effect. This could be, for instance, where there is a conflict with other legislation that Energy Specifics Ltd has to comply with or between service needs. In such circumstances Energy Specifics Ltd is committed to following the required proper assessment and objective justification of any decision in order to demonstrate that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

1.6. Issues regarding harassment and bullying are covered in the Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy. For issues regarding recruitment refer also to the Recruitment policy.

2. The Definition of Equality and Diversity

2.1. Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

2.2. Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for Energy Specifics Ltd.

2.3. Equality and Diversity are not interchangeable but interdependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed and taken account of.



3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to direct employees of Energy Specifics Ltd, workers (engaged through, or by, an employment agency or bureau and supplied to Energy Specifics Ltd on a temporary basis), and all job applicants regarding recruitment.

3.2. Where the Energy Specifics Ltd.'s services are provided by external contractors or third parties based on a specification set by the Energy Specifics Ltd, these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to the Energy Specifics Ltd.'s Equality and Diversity Policy whilst providing services on behalf of the Energy Specifics Ltd.

3.3. This policy applies also to sub-contractors. Energy Specifics Ltd will monitor the performance of contractors and/or third parties and take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviour. However, if any issues become apparent with regards to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party, these will be taken very seriously by Energy Specifics Ltd and raised in the strongest possible terms with the contractor or third party.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. We are committed to the achievement of equal opportunities; this is central to our mission. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of any of the nine "protected characteristics" as defined by the Act. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

We also recognise that the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for staff to discriminate directly or indirectly or harass customers or clients because of the protected characteristics of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision goods and services.

4.2. Although discrimination in goods and services because of age is not yet covered by the Equality Act 2010, Energy Specifics Ltd includes it as a matter of good practice.

- We believe discrimination, either direct or indirect as defined in law, is unacceptable and we will not tolerate it.
- We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment against an individual because they are associated with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment against an individual on a perception that he or she has a particular protected characteristic.
- We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any of our employees or volunteers by third parties such as clients or customers.
- We will not tolerate the victimisation of any employee or volunteer because he or she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so or being about to do so.

4.3. However, our policy is not limited to the minimum standards imposed by the law. We are committed to achieve best practice in equal opportunities. Everyone who is or who seeks to be a member of staff or volunteer of Energy Specifics Ltd is entitled to receive equality of opportunity and treatment that is appropriate and fair irrespective of:

- age
- colour
- disablement
- marital status



- race/ethnicity
- religion
- sex
- gender
- employment status
- sexual orientation
- nationality
- caring responsibility
- socio-economic status
- other unjustifiable factors This list is not exhaustive.

4.4. We will be proactive in all matters relating to equality of opportunity and diversity. We value and will celebrate the richness brought to our organisation by a diverse population, both of staff and clients. We recognise and will seek to reflect the positive contributions brought to Energy Specifics Ltd by the variety of its staff.

4.5. We are committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, victimisation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development, and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by the senior management team.

4.6. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

4.7. We also recognise that the behaviours through which diversity is evident must be consistent with the values that underpin this policy document.

4.8. Additionally, we recognise that despite our best intentions circumstances may arise where we fail to provide an appropriate and professional service to people, consistent with the aims of this policy. We are committed to act in such circumstances.

5. Implementation

5.1. Energy Specifics Ltd will have policies and procedures that support and uphold these equal opportunities policy. As a result, everyone can expect to be treated with fairness and for judgements to be made that respect their human rights and ensure natural justice. Decisions will be made with integrity following a process based upon transparent criteria.

5.2. Energy Specifics Ltd will take action to communicate this policy to all staff, volunteers, and others e.g., visitors, clients, contractors and suppliers of goods and services involved in its activities. We will continue to develop and implement programmes to ensure that all staff have received appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

5.3. Consultation with and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders will be essential for ensuring that our equal opportunities policy and practice is effective. We also need to ensure that we gain feedback to ensure that the practical impact of our policy and practice does not result in unintended or unfair discrimination or in consequences that are contrary to the aims of this policy.

5.4. Energy Specifics Ltd will develop policies, codes of practice and guidance to deal with specific aspects of the implementation of this Policy. These developments will take place against a clear and published action plan.



6. Employment

6.1. Energy Specifics Ltd believes it must recruit the best person for the job and that discrimination prevents this from happening.

6.2. Because of past and existing discrimination, some people have missed out on chances to obtain qualifications or gain experience. This, in turn, can lead to restricted job and training opportunities, and further disadvantages already affected by discrimination. This means that some people are not able to compete for jobs on equal terms. Likewise, organisations may have inadvertently developed systems and styles of working which can prevent some people from achieving their full potential.

6.3. Energy Specifics Ltd.'s Equal Opportunities Policy is there to assist in the elimination of discrimination and ensure fair treatment for all employees by:

- advertising all jobs in appropriate ways to ensure the widest possible response from all sections of the community.
- examining recruitment procedures regularly to ensure people are selected on their abilities and merits.
- offering fair terms and conditions of employment to employees
- ensuring facilities and practices are supportive of employees with family responsibilities.
- providing equipment and facilities to enable people with a disability to obtain a job or continue working with Energy Specifics Ltd.

6.4. Energy Specifics Ltd has developed a Recruitment and Selection Policy. Senior Staff receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its content and provision.

7. Training

7.1. Training will play an important role in assisting employees to implement Energy Specifics Ltd.'s Equal Opportunities Policy and in developing employees' skills and potential.

7.2. All staff will receive training on Equalities and Diversity as part of their induction and within three months of joining our organisation.

7.3. All managers responsible for recruitment and selection will undertake additional Equalities and Diversity Training. The purpose of training will be to

- inform employees of the purpose of the Equal Opportunities Policy
- provide employees, especially managers, with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the policy.
- encourage and enhance the skills of employees, particularly those from those who have traditionally been under-represented in the workforce.

7.4. All employees will need to show that they:

- understand their workplace responsibilities as stated by the Equality Act 2010.
- have knowledge of the protected characteristics that are covered by the law.
- understand what is meant by discrimination and be able to recognise the different types.
- understand what is deemed as prohibited conduct within the Equality Act.
- be aware of the importance of equality and diversity training so that the workplace can become more tolerant and understanding.



8. Responsibility

8.1. All members of Energy Specifics Ltd staff will take responsibility for their actions.

Specifically:

- The overall managerial responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the Chief Executive.
- All managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that this Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented in their areas of responsibility.
- The Operations Manager is responsible for acting in relation to equal opportunities in employment matters, for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and for ensuring appropriate provision of supportive staff development.
- All employees are responsible for ensuring that they always act in a way that is consistent with our equal opportunities policy. Individuals may be personally accountable should any complaint arise or in respect of breaches of policy.
- People not employed by Energy Specifics Ltd but who play a part in its activities, e.g., visitors, clients, contractors and suppliers of goods and services will be made aware of our expectation that they will operate within the scope of this policy. We will expect contractors and suppliers to demonstrate their commitment through evidence of their own equal opportunities policy.

9. Responding to feedback

9.1. Energy Specifics Ltd is committed to respond positively to constructive criticism and complaint in relation to equal opportunities. We recognise that making complaints and expressing concerns in relation to equal opportunities can be challenging. We will, therefore, develop specific advice and support to enable staff and volunteers to put forward their concerns effectively.

9.2. We will take appropriate action to protect staff from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or s within the organisation, or in the course of their duties. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of staff will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary or grievance procedure.

10. Work/life balance

10.1. Energy Specifics Ltd is committed to employees who have commitments outside work, irrespective of whether they have caring responsibilities. Energy Specifics Ltd is committed to helping its employees fulfil their potential at work whilst finding the right work/life balance by offering a Flexible Working Hours Scheme and opportunities to job share where appropriate.

10.2. Energy Specifics Ltd aims to improve the working lives of its employees by having a framework of policies such as the Right to Request Flexible Working, Special Leave to help with caring responsibilities and domestic emergencies and Career Breaks.

10.3. Energy Specifics Ltd is committed to supporting employees with family commitments such as offering family-friendly initiatives as a flexible way to meet childcare costs. The Energy Specifics Ltd salary-sacrifice scheme allows parents to give up some of their salary in place of childcare vouchers to be used to pay for childcare. The salary-sacrifice scheme enables employees to use their vouchers in a way which best suits their needs.



11. Discrimination

11.1. Discrimination may take seven main forms and is defined in law along with the protective characteristics associated with each provision as listed below:

- Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity. For example, a manager does not select a pregnant woman for promotion even though they meet all of the competencies because they are pregnant. This is probably direct discrimination and cannot be justified.
- Associative discrimination occurs when someone discriminates against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. An example of this is when a manager does not give a job-applicant the role, even though they have met all of the competencies for the role, just because the applicant tells the employer they have a disabled partner. This is probably associative discrimination because of disability by association.
- Discrimination by perception occurs when someone discriminates against an individual because they think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. An example of this is when a manager selects a person for redundancy because they incorrectly think they have a progressive condition (i.e., that they are a disabled person). This is probably discrimination by perception because they believe the individual is disabled.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a seemingly neutral provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone places a group who share a characteristic e.g., type of disability at a particular disadvantage. Indirect discrimination may be justified if it can be shown that the provision, criterion, or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. An example of this is when an employer decides to apply a “no hats or headgear” rule to staff. If this rule is applied in the same way to every member of staff, the staff who may cover their heads as part of their religion or cultural background (such as Sikhs, Jews, Muslims and Rastafarians) will not be able to meet this requirement of the dress code and may face disciplinary action as a result. Unless the employer can objectively justify using the rule, this will be indirect discrimination. Relevant protected characteristic includes age, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In addition, the Act extends protection against unjustified indirect discrimination to gender reassignment and disability.
- Dual Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a combination of two relevant protected characteristics. This means that it will be possible for an applicant to claim that they have been treated less favourably not just because of their race but also because of their gender. For example, because the individual is an Asian woman. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. (At present this new concept has not been implemented).
- Detriment arising from a disability arises when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability. This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person had a disability. This type of discrimination is only lawful if the action can be justified



and the employer can show that is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. An example of this when an employer imposes a “no beards” rule as a part of a dress code and tells staff they will be disciplined if they do not comply. An employee is a disabled person who has a skin condition which makes shaving very painful. They have been treated unfavourably (threat of disciplinary action) because of something arising from their disability (their inability to shave). Unless the employer can objectively justify the requirement, this may be a detriment arising from a disability. It may also be a failure to make a reasonable adjustment.

- Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated unfavourably, disadvantaged, or subjected to a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, this policy or the Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination policy or because they are suspected of doing so. (However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint). An example, of this is when an employee requests to work flexibly and their manager refuses their request because they supported a colleague in a complaint of discrimination.
- Third party harassment occurs when an employee is harassed by someone who does not work for the employing organisation such as a customer, visitors, client, contractor, or visitors from another organisation. The employer will become legally responsible if they know an employee has been harassed on two or more occasions by someone and it may also be different individuals each time and fails to take reasonable steps to protect the employee from further harassment.

12. Complaints of Discrimination

12.1. Energy Specifics Ltd takes all claims of discrimination very seriously and will take appropriate action against those concerned. Discrimination occurs when someone directly or indirectly treats a person or a group of people unfavourably because of a protected characteristic of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. This covers all behaviour including remarks and insinuation, both verbal and non-verbal, which cause offence.

12.2. Any member of staff who is subject to harassment, bullying or discrimination is encouraged to refer to Energy Specifics Ltd.’s policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination. This provides details of the steps that can be taken to deal with such an issue.

12.3. If a worker (engaged through, or by, an employment agency or bureau) considers they have been discriminated against they should raise their complaint directly with their employer.

13. People Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility

13.1. Energy Specifics Ltd aims to be an ethical employer of choice and through its People Strategy aims to ensure its workforce can make a valuable contribution to the work of the organisation whilst ensuring we support our workforce’s health and well-being of the workforce.

13.2. The HR strategy is linked to the Energy Specifics Ltd Ethical Policy which aims to create a positive impact within the local, national, and international communities. One of the Energy Specifics Ltd ethical aims is to improve the quality of life for our workforce, families, and the local community.

13.3. Where appropriate, Energy Specifics Ltd actively encourages its employees to participate in local voluntary initiatives and may provide further support to initiatives, which encourage social inclusion.



14. Communication

14.1. The Equality and Diversity policy is available on the Google Drive, HR platform and Energy Specifics Ltd.'s website. Please contact the Operations Manager if you require a copy in an alternative format.

14.2. The details of this policy will be proactively communicated and promoted to all current staff and new starters.

15. Monitoring

15.1. The Operations Manager will review relevant performance indicators and will make regular reports to the Chief Executive. This report will review both progress against the action plan and make appropriate proposals for further development.

- Equality monitoring will be carried out to measure the effectiveness of Energy Specifics Ltd.'s Equal Opportunities Policy, to check the policy is working and act as a basis for future plans.
- Monitoring information will only be used for this purpose and will be treated confidentially.
- We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees to monitor the progress of this policy.
- We will monitor recruitment and selection procedures to ensure discrimination is not occurring.

15.2. We will monitor and publish our progress on achieving greater Equality and Diversity, specifically:

- Demographic details of staff.
- Gender pay gap.
- Pay ratio.

Signed:



Position: Director

Associated Policies

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Reference Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Training and Study Leave Policy
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Complaints and Compliments Procedure
- Induction Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Training Plan

