

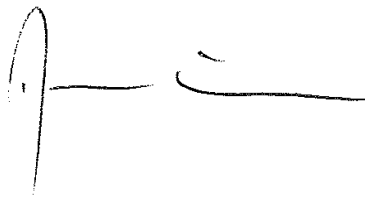
## Equality & Diversity Policy

The Company's objective is to maintain operational standards so that all its employees and employment applicants are treated equally, irrespective of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, gender reassignment, marital status or ethnic origin in accordance with the following:

- Equality Act 2010

All employees are instructed to ensure the following:

1. There shall be no discrimination in respect of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, gender reassignment, marital status or ethnic origin.
2. Recruitment, promotion, training, development and redundancy shall be determined on capability and merit only.
3. All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of this Policy, which applies to the treatment of customers, suppliers and the general public as well as to fellow employees.
4. Any employee, manager, supervisor and director that is involved in recruitment, promotion or training has specific responsibility for the practical application of this Equal Opportunity Policy.
5. In the event that an employee considers that he/she has been the subject of unlawful discrimination, or any form of harassment or victimisation, the employee should refer to the Company's Grievance Procedure.
6. Any employee or director who has been determined to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination shall be subject to disciplinary action according to the Company's Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.
7. If there is any doubt about the terms of this Policy or the application thereof an employee should consult Mr Dean Slingsby, Partner.



Signed:

Printed name: Danny Wilson

Position: Partner

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Review Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2027

## **Equality**

### **Purpose of this Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to encourage an atmosphere in which all employees embrace the benefits of working in a diverse workforce and to promote fair and equal treatment for all employees, job applicants, customers, contractors and visitors, irrespective of their individual differences or any personal characteristics.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all Company employees. This policy relates to all aspects of employment, including individual standards of behaviour, the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, appraisal, pay, promotion and leaving the company. The principles apply equally to all dealings with customers, contractors, suppliers and visitors.

### **Policy Statement**

The Company is committed to the principle of valuing equality and diversity. We recognise the benefits that can be secured through employing a diverse workforce and harnessing the individual talents of staff from different backgrounds and with different skills. These include:

- Tangible business benefits such as improved employee morale, attendance levels, customer satisfaction and profits
- An improved company image leading to a wider customer base and a wider pool of people to recruit from
- The avoidance of costly legal proceedings caused by breaches of equality legislation

The Company is committed to providing fair and equal treatment for all employees, customers, contractors and visitors and all employees are expected to treat everyone with whom they come into contact with dignity and respect. Employees should be aware of the importance the Company attaches to this policy and that breaches will be classed as disciplinary offences and dealt with accordingly.

### **Further Information**

Questions regarding this policy and its operation should be directed to your Line Manager.

## **Diversity**

### **The Policy in Operation**

This policy outlines the Company's approach to equality and diversity at work. It is important to understand the difference between the concepts of equality and diversity.

- Equality (or equal opportunities) is about protecting certain groups of staff against unlawful treatment based on a particular personal characteristic. This protection is normally based on those groups covered by legislation i.e. gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief and age.

Diversity is about recognizing, valuing and using the differences which people have.

## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

In valuing diversity, the Company commits itself to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality. However, in applying this policy the company still needs to take account of current and future equality legislation (and associated codes of practice) including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Equality Act 2010**

The above legislation protects individuals against direct discrimination, indirect perception and association discrimination, harassment (including bullying) and victimisation because of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and gender reassignment, age and religion or belief.

- **Direct discrimination is treating a person less favourably because of a particular personal characteristic.**
- **Indirect discrimination is applying a criteria or practice equally to all people but which has the effect of disadvantaging one group of people (and which cannot be objectively justified for operational purposes).**
- **Harassment is unwanted behaviour which affects the dignity of others.**
- **Bullying is a form of harassment which is normally related to an abuse of power.**
- **Victimisation is treating a person less favourably because they have asserted their rights under this policy or equality legislation (i.e. made or assisted with a complaint).**
- **Associative and perceptive discrimination.**

In pursuing this policy the Company believe that the principles which underpin the above legislation should be extended to all employees regardless of any personal characteristic.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**All Employees:** are expected to have read and understood this policy, ensure they behave in accordance with its principles, encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and immediately report any breaches witnessed.

**All Managers:** are responsible for ensuring this policy is understood and complied with by employees in their area, dealing with breaches and complaints (whether reported or not) seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially and contributing ideas for the advancement of diversity principles within the organisation.

**Senior Management** are responsible for implementing, reviewing, monitoring the effectiveness of and providing advice on this policy, encouraging the adoption of its principles throughout the organisation and ensuring complaints are adequately investigated.

Breaches of this policy may be treated as a disciplinary issue. Additionally, if legal requirements are contravened, both the Company and the employee concerned may be liable to legal proceedings and risk having unlimited damages awarded against them.

Alternatively, some form of training or education may be more appropriate where minor breaches have occurred due to a lack of understanding of equality and diversity principles.

## **IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY**

It is impossible to define all of the characteristics which make people different and are hence covered by this policy.

### **Communicating this policy**

In order to ensure the principles of this policy are embedded in everything we do, all existing staff will receive a copy of this policy. This policy will also be covered in all inductions.

Below are some examples to illustrate how this policy impacts on all other work policies and practices. This list is not exhaustive as each situation must be considered on its merits.

### **General standards of behavior**

The Company expects all employees to always conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner. The Company will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- Physical violence
- Shouting or swearing
- Rudeness
- Isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people because of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age
- Telling offensive jokes or name calling
- The display of offensive material such as pornography or sexist/racist cartoons
- Lewd gestures or remarks

It is no defense for employees to say they did not intend their behaviour to cause offence as it is for the person on the receiving end of the behavior to decide what they consider to be offensive. It is the impact of the behaviour rather than the intent which is important.

### **Recruitment and selection**

Individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of employees will ensure the Company recruitment and selection policy is adhered to and that:

- A carefully worded and objective job role profile is produced for all vacancies, outlining the essential skills, knowledge and experience required
- Job advertisements are agreed by the Senior Management Team and circulated to encourage applications from all sections of the community. Advertisements will not contain any age limits. Steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches a wide labour market and, where relevant, groups underrepresented in the Company
- Short-listing and selection will be based on objective criteria relevant to the job and decisions made by suitably trained staff, purely on the basis of merit. The reasons for all decisions will be recorded
- The Company will monitor applicants' racial origins, sex, disability and age to ensure that this procedure is being implemented and to identify any underrepresented groups.

### **Training, Development and Promotion**

The Company will ensure that irrespective of any personal characteristics:

- The training necessary to implement this equality policy is provided
- All employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential
- Selection for all training, career development opportunities and job moves will be purely on the basis of merit
- Appraisals of performance will be conducted objectively and on time
- Selection for promotion will be purely on the basis of merit
- The composition and movement of employees at different levels will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels.

### **Meeting Individual needs**

As far as possible the Company will try to meet the needs of individuals at work. For example:

- Caring and domestic responsibilities – time off (including paid and unpaid leave) may be appropriate to allow staff to care for children or sick relatives to help them balance their work and home responsibilities
- Working patterns – wherever possible training courses and meetings should be planned to allow attendance by staff working non-standard hours
- Religious practices – it may be necessary to make reasonable changes to working patterns to provide time off for prayer or religious festivals or relax dress standards to meet religious needs

## **Disability**

If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment with us, you are encouraged to tell your Line Manager or a member of the senior Management team about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible.

You may also wish to advise us of any reasonable adjustments to your working conditions or duties of your job which you consider to be necessary, or which would assist you in the performance of your duties.

Management may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate the suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If any employee feels this policy has been breached, they should try to speak to their manager in the first instance, who will ensure all issues are investigated and dealt with appropriately.

Formal complaints about breaches of this policy can be made using the Company's grievance procedure, and complaints should be made via managers or Partner, Dean Slingsby.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimized or treated less favorably as a result.

Further advice and support regarding complaints can be obtained from managers, the HR department.

## **MONITORING, REVIEW AND CONSULTATION**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through the collation of statistics broken down by gender, race, disability and any other areas where it is perceived problems exist.

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current and links appropriately with other policies.

The principles of this policy will also be considered when developing other new organisational policies.