

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES &
DIVERSITY POLICY

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The Employer recognises its legal obligations under anti-discrimination legislation and will treat employees, workers, contractors, clients and members of the public with whom it comes into contact, in a manner which is consistent with the spirit of this legislation. This policy is applicable also to clients, communities, suppliers and contractors, whether permanent or temporary. The policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with customers' and clients' requirements.

SCOPE

The Employer is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to maintaining a working environment free from direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation whether during recruitment, transfers within the Employer's Group, promotion, training, salary and benefits, and severance terms in which all decisions are based on merit. The Employer's aim is to ensure all applicants, employees, workers and others receive equal treatment irrespective of their sex, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, political views, race, colour, ethnic or national origins, religion or beliefs, disability or age (Protected Characteristics). No employees will be disadvantaged by a condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This policy will enable the Employer to send out a strong message of commitment, both internally and externally, to the promotion of equal opportunities and diversity in the organisation or through the supply chain.

DISCRIMINATION

The Employer is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation. The Employer is committed to treating everyone equally in accordance with its core values and with the same attention, courtesy and respect.

Employees must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination in respect of any protected characteristic are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in the Harassment Policy.
- Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

RECRUITMENT

The Employer's recruitment publicity aims to encourage applications from individuals who have appropriate qualifications and/or experience. All recruitment adverts will avoid direct and indirect discrimination. Selection criteria and procedures will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that applicants are assessed purely on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and will be monitored to ensure the criteria and procedures are fair and objective and not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

Wherever possible and appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to the business premises and working arrangements for disabled job applicants, employees and others and for employees who become disabled during the course of their employment, in order that disabled people may be treated equally.

No employee or job applicant will be held back by their disability. All employment decisions will be made in a non-discriminatory manner.

Where any age restrictions are imposed, these will be lawful and justifiable.

In limited recruitment circumstances there may be a genuine occupational requirement or qualification on the basis of race, ethnic origin, national origin, colour or nationality, religion or belief or gender which, if necessary, will be legitimate, justifiable and objective and will be applied in a proportionate manner.

Any applicant or other person who wants to complain about the treatment they have received during any recruitment processes should complain to Stuart Senior in writing. Action and investigation will be taken following the 17 Grievance Procedure in the Employee Handbook.

TRAINING

The Employer will integrate diversity training into its mainstream training and development programmes for directors and will establish training for all employees from awareness to behavioural change relating to diversity.

The Employer seeks to integrate diversity competencies into all Personal Development Programmes and the benefits of having a diverse work force will be included in the Recruitment and Selection Training Programme. Links formed with local communities, schools and colleges will include support information and role models for groups which are under-represented in the workforce to encourage students and others to take up training and career development opportunities in those areas.

Equal consideration will be given to all employees for training and development. All employees will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Wherever possible and appropriate, equal opportunities training will be given to all employees, including the use of non-discriminatory interview techniques. This will include those employees who have responsibility for recruitment and promotion to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees, applicants and others.

TRAVEL

Any requirements for employees to travel extensively, relocate or work additional hours will be kept to a practical minimum and be non-discriminatory and justifiable.

PROMOTION

All promotion is strictly on the basis of ability to do the job. No decision to promote will be made on a discriminatory basis. Promotion will be made on merit. Processes for promotion will be reviewed regularly to ensure that there is no unjustifiably discriminatory impact on any particular group.

Where positive action measures may be taken in accordance with the relevant anti-discrimination legislation, this will be to encourage applications from under-represented groups and all appointments will be made on merit.

EQUAL TREATMENT

Leave Entitlement

The provision of benefits such as maternity leave and other family friendly leaves (see 9 Maternity Policy; 10 Parental Leave Policy; 11 Dependant Care Leave Policy; 18 Paternity Leave Policy; 19 Adoption Leave Policy) will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee on the grounds of their age, gender, marital status, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or on the grounds of disability. This includes taking into account the responsibilities of adult carers.

Part Time Employees

The Employer monitors the Terms and Conditions of Employment of part time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training and promotion opportunities. All requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Flexible Working procedure in Section 23 of this handbook.

Fixed Term and Agency Workers

The employer will monitor the use of fixed term employees and agency workers where applicable and conditions of service to ensure they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities.

RELIGION

Demands of religion (e.g. prayer time and religious holidays), culture (e.g. traditional dress) and special dietary needs will be accommodated wherever possible and practicable.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure their conduct conforms to the expected standards and reflects this policy. Wilful failure to apply the policy or evidence of discrimination, or victimisation or harassment may result in disciplinary action being taken against employees including dismissal.

All employees and other individuals working at the Employer's workplace are required to ensure their behaviour is non-discriminatory to all employees, workers, clients and visitors and are not to victimise any of the above for any reason.

Discrimination and victimisation are not only illegal, but can also affect morale and potentially profitability generally, and may bring about a climate of fear, insecurity, and poor work performance. It is therefore vital that all employees, workers, clients and others understand their responsibilities when on Gleeds premises or work.

Any employee who is aware that other employees, applicants, workers or others are suffering discrimination, whether at the hands of a fellow employee or a client or supplier of the Employer, should notify Stuart Senior.

MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Managers should not instruct or pressurise employees, workers or others to discriminate, victimise, or harass others, nor should they suppress any complaints of discrimination or victimisation in the workplace. Managers are responsible for implementing and monitoring the practices required in this policy, ensuring they are adhered to by their team and that any problems which are raised are dealt with promptly. Failure to do so will be considered a failure to carry out their managerial responsibilities.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The Employer takes Equal Opportunities very seriously and will not tolerate acts which breach this policy. Serious breaches will be treated as misconduct. Unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment will not be tolerated by the Employer and those responsible for such treatment or any breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy and may be dismissed.

RAISING A GRIEVANCE

If an employee feels they have suffered discrimination, then, if possible, they should approach the relevant individual(s) to discuss any problems directly and try to resolve the matter informally. However, it is recognised this may not always be possible, in which case the employee should contact Sheila Bell.

The employee is entitled to raise a formal complaint at any time and in such circumstances the employee is asked to use the Grievance Procedure as set out in this handbook.

CLIENTS NEEDS

The Employer is committed to meeting the diverse needs of clients. The Employer will take into account the needs of clients with a disability and those who are unable to communicate effectively in English. The Employer will not unlawfully discriminate in dealing with third parties, particularly in general procurement.

MONITORING

The composition and movement of employees at different levels will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels with the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to remove any unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and to provide facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

Monitoring will be carried out annually of ethnicity, racial origin, gender disability and age for employees and others in the recruitment, training and promotion, pay and benefits and severance processes to ensure all processes are not discriminating directly or indirectly.

Any other employment practices will be monitored at regular intervals to identify and eliminate any potentially direct or indirect discriminatory practices.

The Employer will obtain the above workforce metrics relating to diversity to compare them with sector and best practice organisations where possible.



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