

Equality + Diversity Policy

This document describes our policy relating to equality and diversity within the workplace.

This policy is designed to work in conjunction with the following policies:

- [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Policy](#)

Revision History

	A	B	C	D
1	Revision	Date	Who	Notes
2	1	14/09/2016	David George	DG + SD reviewed. First document issue,
3	2	Nov 2019	Sallyann Connolly	reviewed and updated

Policy Owner(s) and Key Individuals

	A	B	C	D
1		Name	Job Role	Notes
2	Policy owner	Sue Drake	Company Administrator	
3	Relevant persons	David George	CEO	
4				

1. Introduction

- The firm is committed to eliminating discrimination and to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity in which staff are treated equitably and they can realise their full potential.
- Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each worker feels respected and able to give their best.
- To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all and not to discriminate on grounds of age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, creed, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, parental status, religion, belief or non belief, social or economic class, employment status, or any other criteria that cannot be shown to be properly justifiable.
- If any member of staff or worker has any queries, these should be raised with David George, CEO.

2. Scope

- This policy has been adopted by the firm's Board of Directors and applies to everyone involved in our business.
- For the avoidance of doubt this includes, and is not limited to, all officers of the firm (Directors, non executive directors and shareholders) as well as permanent, fixed term and temporary staff, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, third party representatives, agency workers, agents and sponsors engaged with the firm in the UK or overseas. These groups will be referred to collectively as workers within this policy.
- All contractors and agents acting for or on behalf of the firm should be made aware of this policy.

3. Definitions

- a. 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.
- b. 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 the firm.
- c. Equality and Diversity are not interchangeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed and taken account of.

4. Responsibilities

- a. All workers are required to comply with the law, the firm's policy and good practice at all times.
- b. The prevention, detection and reporting of any actual or perceived acts of discrimination is the responsibility all workers throughout the firm. If you become aware of or suspect that an activity or conduct which is proposed or has been taken is not in line with this policy and/or the law, then you have a duty to report this.
- c. Any such incidents should be reported in accordance with the firm's whistleblowing policy or to David George, CEO.

5. Penalties

- a. Failure to act in accordance with this policy is a serious matter, and the firm may consider taking action, in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure for any incidents not in line with the firms policies.

6. Harassment and Bullying

- a. The firm aims to provide a stimulating and supportive environment for working and learning which will enable workers to fulfil their potential. All members of the firm have an important role to play in creating an environment where harassment is unacceptable.
- b. Workers who feel they are experiencing harassment or bullying in any form, or who have observed behaviour not in line with this policy can contact David George, CEO or Sue Drake, Company Administrator.

7. Discrimination

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

- a. **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.
- b. **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.

- c. **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.
- d. **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 workers. If this rule is applied in exactly the same way to every member of staff, then workers 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 characteristics include 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.
- e. **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).
- f. **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 has a disability. This type of discrimination is only lawful if the action can be justified and the employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. An example of this is when an employer imposes a “no beards” rule as a part of a dress code and tells workers they will be disciplined if they do not comply. The worker 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.
- g. **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 a worker requests to work flexibly and their manager refuses their request because they supported a colleague in a complaint of discrimination.
- h. **Third party harassment** occurs when a worker is harassed by someone who does not work for the employing organisation such as a customer, visitor, client, contractor or visitor from another organisation. The employer will become legally responsible if they know a worker 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 worker from further harassment.

8. Complaints

- a. Senior members of staff are responsible for dealing with complaints from workers under this policy with support from Sue Drake, Company Administrator as appropriate.

- b. Workers who feel they have not been treated equitably in accordance with this policy should raise the matter with their line manager in the first instance.
- c. The Line manager should seek advice from David George, CEO and/or Sue Drake, Company Administrator in order to resolve the complaint.
- d. If the complaint is against their line manager, workers should raise the complaint directly with either David George, CEO, Sue Drake, Company Administrator or with the Board of Directors.
- e. If this does not resolve the matter, the worker may take a complaint in accordance with the Grievance Procedure - the first step of which is to establish whether the complaint may be resolved informally.
- f. No member of staff will be victimised for bringing a complaint under this policy. However, where a complaint is made maliciously and/or on knowingly false information, the complainant may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

7. Policy

- a. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- b. The firm will provide equality and diversity training for all workers.
- c. All workers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect.
- d. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- e. All workers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- f. Our commitment:
 - i. To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our workers are recognised and valued.
 - ii. Every worker is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
 - iii. Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all workers.
 - iv. Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
 - v. We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
 - vi. Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
 - vii. This policy is fully supported by the Board of Directors
 - viii. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.