

Equality & Diversity Policy

VERSION: July 2024

ABOUT THIS POLICY

This policy sets out the Company's approach to equality and diversity. We are 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. We aim to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development of employees, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way we work. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background and make best use of their talents. We are guided by our values in everything we do and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us fulfil our responsibility to **do the right thing** for our customers.

We seek to develop a work environment where we treat all employees, job applicants, customers, contractors and the public both fairly and consistently. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenge discrimination, should it ever arise. We will remove unnecessary barriers for our employees' seeking opportunities through training and development, promotion and career planning.

We will continue to support our leaders, managers, and employees to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in their everyday activities, roles and functions.

We consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups. We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference 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 Company too. We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

SCOPE

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time on a permanent or fixed-term contract, and to associated persons such as secondees, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service. You have personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of your employee induction, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and is fully complied with. This policy is also of relevance to directors, line managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

OUR COMMITMENT

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality, and respect for all. The Company will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, contractor, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic:

- sex
- gender identity

- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion and or belief
- age

Discrimination based on work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities.

Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability.

WHEN DOES THIS POLICY APPLY?

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on The Company's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on socialmedia, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to the Company). We set out below some specific areas of application:

Recruitment

Selection for employment will be based on aptitude and ability. Further detail is set out in our Recruitment and Selection Policy. Where possible, we will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of the recruitment processes to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

Training

You may also be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.

Promotion

All promotion decisions will be made based on merit and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.

During employment

The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

Policies

The application of any Company policies or procedures such as grievances, absence management or disciplinary matters.

HOW WE EXPECT TO BE TREATED BY OUR CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS AND THE PUBLIC

As well as requesting our employees and workers adhere to these standards, we also request customers, clients and members of the public treat our employees with the same level of respect and courtesy. This public statement is published on our Company websites and is communicated to our customers and clients when we work with them:

“We treat everyone with courtesy and respect and ask for the same in return. We ask that you treat our employees courteously – without violence, abuse or harassment.

Any behaviour verbal or physical, which causes staff to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened, is totally unacceptable.

The Zero Tolerance policy includes aggression or threats made in person, over the telephone or in written communication.

We consider threatening behaviour to be:

- Attempted or actual aggressive threatening physical actions made towards any member of staff or worker
- The use of aggressive, threatening, or abusive language, (including raising of the voice, swearing, and cursing, shouting) which threatens or intimidates staff

Any act of discrimination or antagonism based on a protected characteristic including sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and or belief, and age will not be tolerated.

This policy applies throughout our offices and to any employee or worker carrying out our business in any other place or location.

Any instance or threat of physical abuse will be reported to the police.

Instances of abusive/threatening behaviour will be reported to the Chief People Officer and recorded in our incident book. We reserve the right to withdraw our services to anyone using abusive or threatening behaviour.”

PROCESS FOR RAISING CONCERNS

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter through our Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy or Grievance Policy via HR.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure.

The Company will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under the Company Disciplinary and Capability Policy. A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the Company Disciplinary and Capability Policy. Employees may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

We are committed to ensuring that all employees are protected from any victimisation, harassment, or less favourable treatment as a result of raising any justifiable concerns.

Action taken may include reviewing or adapting a Company Policy or procedure, training, or triggering the Disciplinary and Capability Policy depending on the seriousness.

For further clarification on this policy please speak with your Line Manager or HR.

POLICY SIGNOFF

Date of Issue:	01/06/2022
Date of Next Review:	24/07/2025
Name:	Sarah Tuck – Director of People & Facilities

AMENNDMENT HISTORY

Version	Modified On	Modified By	Comments
1.0	01/06/2022	Sarah Cleobury	
2.0	16/11/2022	Sarah Tuck	Included company logo and signoff info
3.0	16/11/2022	Sarah Cleobury	Next review date amended: 01/06/2024
4.0	24/07/2024	Sarah Tuck	General annual review & rebrand