

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Document Control

Document Title:

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Document Owner:

David Pett

Version Control:

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Changes Made
1.0	2014	David pett	Initial draft created
2.0	22/7/25	David Pett	Annual review and updates to reflect new legislation

Review and Approval:

- **Next Review Date:** 1/7/26

Distribution:

This document is distributed to:

- All employees via QC Handbook

Accessibility:

The policy is available in the following formats:

- Digital copy on the company intranet.

- Printed copies upon request.
- Alternative formats (e.g., large print, braille) available upon request to ensure accessibility.

General Commitment

We are committed to fostering a workplace where fairness, equality, and respect are integral to everything we do. This commitment extends to our interactions with employees, clients, partners, and third parties, promoting an open and inclusive culture that values the diverse backgrounds of everyone we work with.

We pledge to treat everyone fairly, with courtesy and respect, regardless of their:

- Disability
- Gender or gender identity
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy, maternity, paternity, or parental status
- Race, ethnicity, or national origins
- Color or nationality
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religion or belief, including lack of belief
- Socioeconomic background or career experience

These are collectively referred to as 'Protected Characteristics' in this policy. Our aim is to create an environment where all individuals feel supported and empowered to thrive.

We are committed to making adjustments, where reasonable, to reduce barriers faced by people with disabilities or other challenges, ensuring equitable access as job applicants, employees, clients, or candidates for career development.

Compliance with Legislation

We adhere to all current equality laws, regulations, and best practices, including but not limited to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010 Codes of Practice (Services, Public Functions, Employment, and Equal Pay)

We remain vigilant in aligning our practices with relevant amendments, future legislative changes, and leading diversity standards.

Forms of Discrimination

The following types of discrimination are strictly prohibited under this policy:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favorably due to a Protected Characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** Implementing a policy or practice that disadvantages individuals with a Protected Characteristic, unless it is objectively justified as necessary for achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Discrimination by Association:** Treating someone unfairly due to their association with an individual who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- **Perception Discrimination:** Treating someone unfairly because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic, even if that perception is incorrect.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they have raised a concern or taken action under equality laws.
- **Harassment:** Subjecting someone to unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which violates their dignity or creates a hostile, degrading, or offensive environment. This includes physical, verbal, and non-verbal acts.

Recruitment, Selection, and Progression

We are committed to ensuring that our recruitment, selection, and progression processes are fair, transparent, and inclusive. Our approach includes:

1. **Recruitment**

- Job advertisements will be designed to attract a diverse range of candidates and will avoid language or criteria that could unintentionally exclude individuals with Protected Characteristics.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate candidates with disabilities or other challenges during the recruitment process.
- We will actively seek to address underrepresentation by promoting opportunities to diverse communities and networks.

2. Selection

- Selection criteria and processes will be based on objective, job-related requirements to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Interview panels will be trained to recognise and mitigate unconscious bias.
- Feedback will be provided to candidates upon request to support their development.

3. Progression

- Career development opportunities, including promotions, training, and mentoring, will be accessible to all employees.
- We will monitor progression rates across different groups to identify and address any disparities.
- Positive action may be taken, where legally permissible, to address underrepresentation in senior roles or specific areas of the business.

By embedding these principles into our recruitment, selection, and progression practices, we aim to create a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

Strategic Priorities and Approach

1. An Inclusive Environment

We aim to build an inclusive workplace that values and reflects the experiences and backgrounds of our employees and clients. By promoting diverse perspectives, we seek to improve decision-making, foster innovation, and create better outcomes for everyone we serve.

2. Flexibility and Accessibility

We recognise the importance of flexible working practices to support employees' needs, particularly for those with disabilities, caring responsibilities, or other challenges. This includes creating inclusive workspaces that enable collaboration and productivity.

3. Data-Driven Improvement

To ensure our Diversity and Inclusion goals are met effectively, we will adopt a feedback-driven approach to track progress and drive accountability. This includes:

- Monitoring representation and inclusion across all levels.
- Using employee feedback to identify challenges and measure the impact of our initiatives.
- Reviewing policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and effective.

4. Zero Tolerance for Bullying and Discrimination

Bullying, harassment, and discrimination have no place in our organisation. We are committed to:

- Encouraging an open culture where individuals feel safe to raise concerns.
- Providing clear processes for reporting and addressing issues.
- Ensuring accountability in tackling unacceptable behavior.

5. Cultural Awareness and Training

It is our aim to invest in training and development to equip our employees and managers with the knowledge and skills needed to drive inclusivity. Training will focus on:

- Understanding diversity and unconscious bias.
- Building an inclusive leadership style.
- Recognising and addressing groupthink, encouraging diverse perspectives.

6. Employee Development

We are committed to helping employees develop their careers through access to fair and transparent opportunities, such as training programs, career progression pathways, and individual development plans. Positive action may be used, where legally applicable, to improve underrepresentation and ensure equality of opportunity.

Procedure to Monitor Diversity and Collate Equality Data

To ensure compliance with our Diversity and Inclusion commitments, we will implement a robust procedure to monitor diversity and collate equality data. This includes:

1. Data Collection

- We will collect workforce diversity data through anonymous surveys and self-reporting mechanisms.
- Data will be gathered on Protected Characteristics, as well as other relevant factors such as socioeconomic background and career experience.
- Participation in data collection will be voluntary, and all information will be handled in accordance with data protection laws.

2. Analysis and Reporting

- Diversity data will be analysed to identify trends, gaps, and areas for improvement.
- Reports will be shared with leadership to inform decision-making and drive accountability.
- Where appropriate, anonymised data and insights will be published to promote transparency and demonstrate our commitment to diversity.

3. Action Planning

- Insights from diversity data will be used to develop targeted initiatives to address underrepresentation and improve inclusion.
- Progress will be reviewed regularly, and adjustments will be made to ensure the effectiveness of our actions.

SRA Code of Conduct for Firms (1.5)

In accordance with the **SRA Code of Conduct for Firms (1.5)**, we are required to "monitor, report, and publish workforce diversity data." To meet this obligation:

1. Integration with Policy

- The process for monitoring, reporting, and publishing diversity data is outlined in this Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.
- This ensures that our approach aligns with regulatory requirements and supports our broader commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace.

2. Publication of Results

- Where appropriate, the results of our diversity monitoring will be published to demonstrate transparency and accountability.
- Published data will be anonymised to protect individual privacy and comply with data protection laws.

3. Continuous Improvement

- We will regularly review our processes to ensure compliance with the SRA Code of Conduct and other relevant regulations.
- Feedback from employees and stakeholders will be used to refine our approach and drive continuous improvement.

Monitoring and Accountability

The success of this policy will rely on regular review and accountability. We will:

- Regularly assess the impact of our equality initiatives using data and employee feedback.
- Set measurable objectives to improve diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure leadership accountability by embedding these objectives into individual and team goals.
- Promote transparency in our progress through routine reporting.

This policy will be reviewed annually to reflect changes in legislation, best practices, and organisational needs. By embedding these principles into our organisation's culture and operations, we aim to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.

Let me know if you'd like further adjustments!