

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. OVERVIEW

The Chamber is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating unlawful discrimination. To do this effectively the Chamber needs people from diverse backgrounds to ensure that it makes sound decisions that are representative of the different perspectives within society. The Chamber also believes that by making all our colleagues feel welcome and included, they will deliver the best possible outcomes for members/customers.

The Chamber continually seeks ways to improve our way of working to be more inclusive and equal, and have a Diversity and Inclusivity (D&I) internal working group made up of Champions from across the Chamber.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The policy's purpose is to:

- Commit to a Chamber that is free from discrimination and prejudice
- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment and recruitment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- Not unlawfully discriminate because of the UK Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

3. CHAMBER COMMITMENT

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include colleagues conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
- All colleagues should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, members/customers, suppliers and the public
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, members/customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

- Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all colleagues, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues. The Chamber aims to develop a Diversity Champion Group in 2021 to challenge policies, processes and training.

4. DISCRIMINATION

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

The following forms of discrimination 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 our anti-harassment and bullying 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.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

Shortlisting and interviews should be done by more than one person and where possible be a diverse panel from the outset.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

5.1 Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

5.2 Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

6. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our grievance procedure or anti-harassment and bullying policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

This policy has been approved by the Chief Executive.

Signed:



Title: Chief Executive

Date: January 2023