

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

This Equality and Diversity Policy is designed to ensure that Greystoke is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 in all of our structures and activities.

1. OUR POLICY

1.1 Greystoke embraces diversity and will seek to promote the benefits of diversity in all of our business activities. We will seek to develop a business culture that reflects that belief.

1.2 Greystoke is committed to diversity and will promote diversity for all employees and applicants and shall adhere to such a policy at all times. We will review on an on-going basis all aspects of recruitment to avoid unlawful or undesirable discrimination.

1.3 Greystoke will treat everyone equally irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, age, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political beliefs or membership or non-membership of a Trade Union or spent convictions, and places an obligation upon all staff to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

1.4 Greystoke is committed to providing training for its entire staff in equal opportunities practice. Greystoke shall avoid stipulating any unnecessary requirements which would exclude a higher proportion of a particular gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or racial group or which would exclude disabled job applicants; and will not prescribe any requirements as to marital or civil partnership status;

1.5 Greystoke shall not discriminate unlawfully in any terms of employment or terms of engagement. Greystoke will ensure that candidates are assessed only in accordance with their merits, qualifications and abilities to perform the relevant duties required by a particular vacancy.

1.6 Greystoke will not accept instructions from clients that indicate an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

2. OUR COMMITMENT

2.1 To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.

2.2 Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

2.3 Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.

2.4 To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

2.5 We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

2.6 Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

2.7 This policy is fully supported by senior management.

2.8 The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

3.1 Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Managing Director. Directors and Managers will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each manager will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.
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3.2 The Managing Director will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

4.1 Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

5. DISCRIMINATION

Unlawful discrimination occurs in the following circumstances:

5.1 Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where one individual treats or would treat another individual less favourably because of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership, age, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political beliefs (“the protected categories”).

It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person on the grounds of a protected category:

- in the terms on which the firm offers to provide any of its services;
- by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide any of its services;
- in the way it provides any of its services.

5.2 Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs where an employer applies a provision, criterion or practice generally, which disadvantages a minority group in the community on the basis of a protected category.

If the contract requires characteristics which amount to a genuine occupational requirement or the instruction is lawfully discriminatory due to a statutory exception or objective justification, Greystoke will not deal further with the contract unless the client provides written confirmation of such genuine occupational requirement, exception or justification.

5.3 Associative discrimination

An employer must not treat a job applicant, employee or former employee worse than any other because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic. For example, allowing one person to work flexibly so that they can care for an elderly relative while not allowing another person to do so to care for a younger person. If the decision is based on the age of the person being cared for, this would be discrimination because of age by association.

5.4 Discrimination by perception

An employer must not treat a job applicant, employee or former employee worse than another because they incorrectly think that they have a protected characteristic. For example, by not giving an applicant the job, even though they are the best qualified person, because they think that the applicant is gay. This is direct discrimination because of sexual orientation.

5.5 Discrimination by victimisation

An employer must not treat a job applicant, employee or former employee badly or victimise them because they have complained about discrimination or helped someone else complain or have done anything to uphold their own or someone else's equality law rights.

6. DISCRIMINATION ARISING FROM DISABILITY

6.1 Discrimination

Direct discrimination against a person occurs where, a person is treated less favourably because of disability, either their own disability or because someone they are associated with has a disability. Indirect discrimination occurs when a practice, criterion or provision which cannot be objectively justified is applied to everyone but results in person with a disability being placed at a disadvantage. Disability arising from discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably because of something arising in connection with their disability.

6.2 Duty to make reasonable adjustments and to provide auxiliary aids and services

This is a similar protection to indirect discrimination in the other protected categories. Where a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of an employer, or any physical feature of the employer's premises, places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, it will be the duty of an employer to take such steps as are reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, to remove the provision, criterion, practice or physical feature.

Agencies must take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids or services if this would make it easier for the disabled person to use their services. For instance, an appropriate auxiliary aid or service can include the provision of information on audiotape or provision of a sign language interpreter.

6.3 Greystoke will not discriminate against a disabled person on the grounds of disability:

- in the arrangements i.e. application form, interview or arrangements for selection for determining to whom a job should be offered; or
- in the terms on which employment is offered; or
- by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering the disabled person a job for reasons connected with their disability; or
- in the opportunities afforded to the person for receiving any benefit, or by refusing to afford, or deliberately not affording him or her any such opportunity; or
- by subjecting him or her to any other detriment (detriment will include refusal of training or transfer, demotion, reduction of wage, or harassment).

6.4 Greystoke will accordingly make career opportunities available to all people with disabilities and every practical effort will be made to provide for the needs of staff, candidates and clients.

6.5 Wherever possible Greystoke will make reasonable adjustments to hallways, passages and doors in order to provide and improve means of access for disabled employees and workers. However, this may not always be feasible, due to circumstances creating such difficulties as to render such adjustments as being beyond what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

7. AGE DISCRIMINATION

7.1 Greystoke will not discriminate directly or indirectly, harass or victimise any person on the grounds of their age. We will encourage clients not to include any age criteria in contract specifications.

7.2 Greystoke is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience, and attitude are suitable for the requirements of the various positions regardless of age. No age requirements will be stated in any job advertisements on behalf of the company.

7.3 Greystoke will request age as part of its recruitment process but such information will not be used as selection, training or promotion criteria or in any detrimental way and is only for compilation of personal data, which the company holds on all employees and workers and as part of its equal opportunities monitoring process.

8. PART-TIME WORKERS

8.1 This Diversity Policy also covers the treatment of those employees and workers who work on a part-time basis, Greystoke recognises that it is an essential part of this policy that part time employees are treated on the same terms, with no detriment, as full time employees (albeit on a pro rata basis) in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, maternity leave, parental and domestic incident leave. Greystoke also recognises that part time employees must be treated the same as full time employees in relation to training and redundancy situations.

9. HARASSMENT POLICY

9.1 Greystoke is committed to providing a work environment free from unlawful harassment on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, age, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political beliefs or any other basis protected by legislation is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Greystoke.

9.2 This policy prohibits unlawful harassment by any employee of Greystoke.

9.3 Examples of prohibited harassment are:

- verbal or written conduct containing derogatory jokes or comments;

- slurs or unwanted sexual advances;
- visual conduct such as derogatory or sexually orientated posters;
- photographs, cartoons, drawings or gestures which some may find offensive;
- physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or any interference because of sex, race or any other protected category basis;
- threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favours;
- retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

9.4 If you believe that you have been unlawfully harassed, you should make an immediate report to the Chief Operating Officer followed by a written complaint as soon as possible after the incident. Your complaint should include:

- Details of the incident
- Name(s) of the individual(s) involved
- Name(s) of any witness(es)

9.5 Greystoke will undertake a thorough investigation of the allegations. If it is concluded that unlawful harassment has occurred, remedial action will be taken.

9.6 Any employee(s) who Greystoke finds to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to the disciplinary procedure and any sanction may include termination. [A person who discriminates or harasses may be personally liable for payment of compensation to the person offended, in addition to any compensation payable by Greystoke. There is no statutory cap on the amount of compensation which may be awarded in discrimination cases. Under the Criminal Justice Act 1994, harassment became a criminal offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000 and/or a prison term of up to 6 months. Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the penalties for aggravated harassment are an unlimited fine and/or 5 years imprisonment.]

9.7 Your right not to be harassed by third parties

Third-party harassment occurs where a Company employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Greystoke will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. Greystoke will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

The Equality Act 2010 makes Greystoke potentially liable for harassment of its employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of the company. Greystoke may be liable if they are aware that harassment has taken place previously and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

10. GENDER REASSIGNMENT

10.1 Greystoke recognises that any employee or worker may wish to change their gender during the course of their employment with the company. Greystoke will support any employee or worker through the reassignment.

10.2 Greystoke will make every effort to try to protect an employee who has undergone, is undergoing or intends to undergo gender reassignment, from discrimination or harassment within the workplace.

10.3 All employees will be expected to comply with Greystoke's policy on harassment in the workplace. Any breach of such a policy will lead to the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

10.4 Where an employee is engaged in work where the gender change imposes genuine problems Greystoke will make every effort to reassign the employee to an alternative role in the Company, if so desired by the employee.

10.5 Any employee suffering discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment should make recourse to the Company's grievance procedure.

11. COMPLAINTS AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

11.1 Greystoke has in place procedures for monitoring compliance with this policy and for dealing with complaints of discrimination. These are available from the Managing Director and will be made available immediately upon request.

11.2 Any discrimination complaint will be investigated fully.