

Equality and Diversity Policy

Statement

The Firm is committed to preventing discrimination and to promoting equality and diversity. The Firm is committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010 and Principle 9 of the SRA Handbook 2011, which requires that we run our business in a way that encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity. The Firm is committed to achieving the mandatory Outcomes in Chapter 2 of the Code of Conduct. We consistently work to ensure that we are compliant with all current and future equality and anti-discrimination legislation and associated codes of practice.

Definitions

Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Generally, a person has been discriminated against if:

- they have been treated less favourably than another person on one or more of the grounds set out above; or
- they are subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for instance, their sex or race; or
- they have a disability and reasonable steps have not been taken to meet their needs; or
- they have been subject to victimisation or harassment on one or more of the grounds set out above.

Victimisation

Someone is victimised where they suffer less favourable treatment because they have, in good faith, made a complaint under this policy, acted as a witness or accompanied a complainant to a hearing.

Harassment

Someone is harassed where they suffer any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Equality in employment

This policy applies to arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment including promotion, training and any other employment related activities.

All employees, workers and job applicants will be treated equally regardless of their disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-term status.

Recruitment

The firm will take such reasonable steps as appropriate to ensure that applications are encouraged from a diverse range of people regardless of their disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-term status.

The firm will use its best endeavours to comply with any targets for the employment of ethnic minorities as are produced from time to time by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Promotion and Career development

Promotion within the firm will be based solely on merit.

The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no discriminatory impact on any particular group.

Disability

The Firm will take such steps, and make such adjustments, as are reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent any of its employees or consultants who suffer from any disability from being placed at a substantial disadvantage on account of their disability.

Equality in our dealings with 3rd parties

The principle of equal treatment will also apply to the Firm's professional dealings with third parties including clients, barristers, other solicitors, consultants and suppliers.

Barristers

Barristers should be instructed on the basis of their skills, experience and ability. The decision to instruct or not to instruct a barrister will not be based on disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-term status.

Suppliers

Where the firm uses the services of agencies, contractors and other third parties they shall where appropriate be asked to comply with the firm's policy on equal opportunities and diversity.

Clients

The Firm is generally free to decide whether to accept instructions for any particular client but any refusal to act will not be based on disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-term status. Each and every client will be treated equally and fairly.

Disability

The Firm will take such steps, and make such adjustments, as are reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent any of its clients or potential clients who suffer from any disability from being placed at a substantial disadvantage on account of their disability.

Responsibilities

Everyone has a personal responsibility to observe and apply this policy. Action will be taken under the Firm's disciplinary procedure against anyone who is found to have committed, authorised or condoned an act of discrimination.

Compliance

The principles of equality and diversity are central to our ethos. This policy will be readily accessible to all members of the Firm and provided to clients and third parties on request. An electronic copy is also available on the Firm's website at www.bulfin.co.uk.

On joining the Firm, staff and consultants will receive training on the policy as part of the induction process. The policy wording will be reviewed annually by Karen Bulfin and any changes communicated to all staff. Staff will be reminded of the policy whenever relevant in the course of their employment

Complaints of discrimination

In employment

Any employee who believes that discrimination is taking place should talk to Karen Bulfin. All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with the Firm's grievance procedure.

By third parties

All complaints of discrimination will be investigated by Karen Bulfin and clients or prospective clients who believe that discrimination has taken place will be invited to use the Firm's complaints procedure

Monitoring and review

The policy will be monitored and reviewed in a manner proportionate to the size and nature of the Firm on a regular basis to measure its progress and judge its effectiveness. In particular, the Firm will, as appropriate, monitor and record:

- (a) The gender and ethnic composition of the workforce and partners as well as the number of disabled staff, partners at different levels of the firm.
- (b) The ethnicity, gender and disability of all applicants, short listed applicants and successful applicants for jobs and training contracts;
- (c) The number and outcome of complaints of discrimination made by staff, partners, barristers, clients and other third parties; and
- (d) the disciplinary action (if any) taken against employees by race, gender disability and age.

This information will be used to review the progress and impact of the policy. Any changes required will be made and implemented.

This policy will be communicated and amended and updated where necessary. Karen Bulfin is responsible for the operation of the policy.

Last Reviewed: May 2013