

Equality and diversity policy

Issued November 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Lichfields is committed to equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination. We aim for our staff to be representative of the communities we work within; and to create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, promoting dignity and respect where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- 1.2 In order to support these aims we will:
- 1 Ensure equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment.
 - 2 Ensure we do not discriminate in line with the requirements of the 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 (gender) and sexual orientation;
 - 3 Oppose and avoid all forms of discrimination including in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and disciplinary matters, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, and training.
 - 4 Demonstrate our commitment to continual improvement in our performance in this area of our business.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all in our employment including full-time, part-time, temporary, intern and agency staff all of whom have a duty to act at all times in accordance with it.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all aspects of our business including advertising, recruitment, training and development, promotion, conditions of service, use of and access to facilities including health and safety, grievance and disciplinary procedures, and termination of employment, including redundancy.
- 2.3 This policy is also applicable to the treatment of our clients, suppliers, and visitors by our staff and the treatment of our staff by these third parties. Clients will be made aware of this policy in our terms of appointment.
- 2.4 All contracts between Lichfields and those who supply us with goods, materials or services will include a clause prohibiting unlawful discrimination or harassment by contractors to our staff.
- 2.5 This policy complies with relevant legislation and regulations, including the: Equality Act 2010; Sex Discrimination (gender reassignment) Regulations and Gender Recognition Act 2004; Employment Rights Act 1996; Employment Act 2002; Civil Partnership Act 2004; Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974; Work and Families Act 2006; Part Time Workers Regulations 2000; and the Fixed Term Employees Regulations 2002.
- 2.6 Other policies and procedures (as set out in section 6.0) sit alongside and operate in parallel with this policy. These include our recruitment and learning and development procedures;

Discrimination, harassment and bullying policy; Whistleblowing policy; Disciplinary procedure and Grievance procedure.

- 2.7 Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not discriminate, create unfair conditions of employment or create unequal rates of pay. We actively engage with employment agencies and education institutions local to each of our offices and publicise vacancies to encourage disadvantaged groups to apply for job vacancies. Our learning and development procedures ensure such opportunities are available to all staff, who are encouraged to realise their full potential in the business.

3.0 Implementation

- 3.1 Our senior directors and other management staff have a responsibility to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to this policy and promote the Company's aims and objectives with regard to equality and diversity.
- 3.2 Our Equality and Diversity policy is supported by an operating plan which describe the actions the Company is taking to achieve the aims and objectives of this policy and to continually improve our performance in this area of our business. The plan sets out our commitment to training staff about their rights and responsibilities under this policy and the incorporation of equality objectives into our senior director appraisal mechanism.
- 3.3 The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated or amended in accordance with the outcome of that review and as otherwise might be required by changes in the law.
- 3.4 Our staff and other stakeholders are encouraged to make any suggestions how we can improve our performance in relation to this policy using our existing engagement mechanisms, such as client 360-degree appraisals or staff workshops; or at any other time, via the HR Manager.

4.0 Roles & Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for the day to day implementation of this policy.
- 4.2 This policy is communicated to all employees and job applicants and can be found on the intranet, in our Employee Handbook and on the careers section of our website.
- 4.3 All staff receive training on this policy, on their rights and responsibilities under the policy, and how this affects the way they carry out their duties.
- 4.4 Any questions regarding the roles and responsibilities or the implementation of this policy should be referred to the Chief Executive or the HR Manager.

5.0 Breaches of Policy

- 5.1 The Company takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination by fellow staff, clients, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of our work.
- 5.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and dealt with under our Grievance and Disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Any such breaches may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. 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

6.0 Associated policies and procedures

- 1 [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- 2 [Discrimination, harassment and bullying policy](#)
- 3 [Equality and Diversity Training Plan](#)
- 4 [Family Friendly Policy](#)
- 5 [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- 6 ['Giving More' our social responsibility document](#)
- 7 [Grievance Policy](#)
- 8 [Induction Checklist](#)
- 9 [Study and professional qualifications policy](#)
- 10 [Whistleblowing Policy](#)