

2.3 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Overview

This policy applies to all employees at Stanton Williams. Any contractors working with Stanton Williams are also expected to comply with this policy.

The policy does not form a part of your contract of employment with Stanton Williams and it may change from time to time. You will be advised of any changes and the amended policy will be updated.

The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Directors and the Practice Manager. The day to day operation of the policy is delegated to all managers and staff.

Policy statement

Stanton William is proud to be an employer of a diverse range of staff and is an equal opportunities employer. It is important to our business that we recruit and retain the best architects and support staff, from all backgrounds, and that these people reflect and understand the diversity of the people and organisations we work with.

A key objective of our policy is to provide a working environment in which people feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated with respect and dignity.

Our aim in respect of equality and diversity

Using fair and objective employment practices, our aim is to ensure that:

- All employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment
- All employees have the right to be free from discrimination, harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour based on the nine 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010, namely sex, transgender status, marital status, civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexuality
- All employees are not treated less favourably on the grounds of other irrelevant factors such as socioeconomic status or family circumstances
- All employees have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential

Employee responsibilities

We expect you to behave as follows:

- Show respect and courtesy to others at all times, both in person and in writing, including emails
- Express yourself appropriately and carefully in all your instructions
- Listen to others respectfully and attentively
- Deal with disagreements assertively and not aggressively
- Value and welcome differences in people
- Use language appropriately and not in a way that may offend, alienate or patronise others
- Not to engage in harassing or bullying behaviour

Definitions

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

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. It may also, in some cases, occur by association i.e. where a person is put at a disadvantage due to a characteristic of another person they associate with.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. Stanton Williams is committed to ensuring that no policy, procedure, provision, rule, requirement, condition or criterion will be imposed on any worker or job applicant without justification if it would be likely to put that person at a disadvantage on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is also prohibited, as is any form of bullying. Harassment and bullying are dealt with further in our **Dignity at Work Policy**.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.

Commitments in respect of protected characteristics

Gender

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at all levels of the organisation through:

- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Supporting employees in balancing their life at work and at home
- Supporting employees who become pregnant and taking active steps to facilitate their return to work after maternity leave

Transgender status

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. Stanton Williams will take positive steps to support a trans-gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Marital status

People are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status.

Race

We will:

- Challenge racial stereotypes
- Respect and value different racial and cultural backgrounds and perspectives

Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued at all levels of the organisation through:

- Focusing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- Challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities
- Making appropriate adjustments in the workplace

Age

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- Challenging age stereotyping
- Recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce

Religious or other belief

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices or other strongly-held beliefs by recognising individuals' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance.

HIV

Discrimination against an employee or potential employee on grounds that he or she has, or is thought to have, HIV or AIDS is not acceptable, and confidentiality will be respected in line with the wishes of an individual with HIV or AIDS.

Sexuality

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- Respecting different lifestyles
- Challenging negative stereotypical views

Commitments in respect of organisational processes

Vacancy Advertising

For specific job vacancies, we recruit via agencies that have an equal opportunities policy, or via press advertisements.

Selection and Recruitment

Selection criteria (job description and employee specification) are kept under review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

More than one person is always involved in the selection interview and recruitment process.

Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies are clearly recorded.

Removing barriers and providing facilities

Wherever possible, efforts are made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the needs of our diverse workforce.

Monitoring

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively (and for no other purpose) Stanton Williams maintains records of employees' and applicants' racial origins, gender and disability.

Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

Personnel Records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the **Equality and Diversity Policy** (and for no other purpose) a record is kept of all employees' and job applicants' gender, racial origins and disability.

Access to this information is strictly controlled and limited to those entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Raising concerns

Any employee who believes they have been subject to discrimination or harassment should raise the matter with the Practice Manager or another senior manager, in order that the matter may be dealt with. The employee can find out about his/her options in the **Dignity at Work Policy**.

Breaches of our **Equality and Diversity Policy** are regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.