

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

General commitment

Gaffrey Brown Solicitors LLP embraces diversity and encourages our employees to share their views and lifestyles, thereby broadening everyone's awareness of differences. We believe in fostering an environment of inclusion that encourages directors and employees to be successful. By valuing our differences we build upon our individual, team and Firm strengths. It is an approach that we believe benefits our people and our clients.

The Firm is committed to preventing discrimination and promoting equality and diversity.

All job applicants, members of the Firm (including employees and temporary workers) 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.

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

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

The Firm is committed to complying with Principle 9 of the SRA Handbook 2011 which requires that we run the business in a way that encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity and 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 anti-discrimination legislation and associated codes of practice.

What is 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
- 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
- they have a disability and reasonable steps have not been taken to meet their needs
- they have been subject to victimisation or harassment on one or more of the grounds set out above.

What is 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.

What is 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.

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.

Barristers

Barristers should be instructed on the basis of their skills, experience and ability.

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.

Responsibilities

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

The Firm will take such steps, and make such adjustments, as are reasonable in all the circumstances in order to prevent any of its employees, partners, members, directors or clients who are disabled from being placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with those who are not disabled.

Compliance

The principles of equality and diversity are central to our ethos. This policy will be readily accessible to all clients and third parties on request. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Complaints of discrimination

Any employee who believes that discrimination is taking place should talk to Kevin Brown as Equality and Diversity Officer or Sabir Hussain as Compliance Officer for Legal Practice in the first instance. The Firm will treat seriously, and will take action where appropriate, all complaints of discrimination or harassment on any of the forbidden grounds made by employees, partners, clients, barristers, or other third parties. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Firm's grievance or complaints procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

The Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter

The Firm is a signatory of the Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter, a flagship diversity initiative of the legal profession. It is an instantly recognisable public statement of commitment by its signatories and a framework for positive action across all strands of diversity. The aim of the Charter is to encourage law firms to strive to develop and implement best practices in equality, diversity and inclusion. More information with regards to the Charter can be found on the Law Society website:

www.lawsociety.org.uk/practicesupport/equalitydiversity/inclusioncharter.

Monitoring and reviewing

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:

- the gender and ethnic composition of the workforce and directors as well as the number of disabled staff, directors at different levels of the Firm
- the ethnicity, gender and disability of all applicants, short listed applicants and successful applicants for jobs and training contracts
- the number and outcome of complaints of discrimination made by staff, directors, barristers, clients and other third parties.

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. Kevin Brown, as Equality and Diversity Director, with Sabir Hussain as COLP are responsible for the operation of this policy.