

## Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy

### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Weightmans is committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of diversity. Weightmans treats all members of the firm fairly, and creates an environment and positive working relationships which enable everyone to contribute their best.
- 1.2. Weightmans does not tolerate practices or activities which discriminate against, or otherwise treat people unfairly on the grounds of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, philosophical belief or religion, race or any other social or cultural grounds.

### 2. Business Background

- 2.1. Weightmans' aim is to be an Employer of Choice, characterised by recruitment and retention of highly talented people who are committed to the success of the firm. To achieve this, we recognise that we need to engage every member of the firm. Promoting and supporting diversity is a fundamental aspect of our policy, and will enable us to attract and retain the best people.
- 2.2. The core values which underpin this aim are:
  - Results for our clients, success for our people
  - Teamwork and respect for each other

### 3. Principles

- 3.1. We will work towards best practice rather than statutory compliance.
- 3.2. Equal opportunity and diversity issues are integrated throughout our people management practices and procedures.

### 4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity In Practice

- 4.1. This policy has been developed with regard to the statutory framework, and best practice. Information and guidance will be sought regularly from the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, the Law Society, Department for Constitutional Affairs and other relevant organisations for best practice developments.
- 4.2. Recruitment and Selection processes are designed to ensure that all candidates are assessed objectively against standard, job-specific criteria. The process is managed by people trained in equal opportunities and diversity best practice. Everyone

involved in recruitment activity adheres to this policy and receives appropriate training and guidance in fair and objective selection methods. Our policy statement is issued to recruitment agencies who supply of permanent, contract and temporary staff. The recruitment and selection policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

- 4.3. Opportunities for training, development and career progression are open to everyone. All members of the firm have access to a comprehensive programme of training, including job-related and professional development. The firm supports further education and opportunities for formal legal qualification are open to all on the application of objective measurable criteria. All training and development needs are identified on the basis of individual skills requirements and business needs.
- 4.4. The firm supports flexible working, and operates a flexible working policy, which enables all members of Weightmans to apply for flexible working practices. The HR team are fully trained in the implementation of this policy and provide guidance and training to managers as appropriate.
- 4.5. Performance is managed on the basis of objective and measurable criteria, related directly to the success of the firm. Measures to support and tackle underperformance focus on these criteria. Business Centre Managers are trained in the use of constructive feedback and performance management techniques.
- 4.6. The reward policy and practices ensure that the firm's reward package is benchmarked externally and that internal comparisons are fair by a process of annual audit.
- 4.7. Individuals are supported in bringing claims of bullying, harassment or discrimination. All claims are treated sensitively and confidentially by members of the firm, trained in dealing with such matters. Cases are resolved as quickly as possible. Where acts of harassment, bullying or discrimination are found to have taken place, they will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.8. A positive working environment is supported through people management policies and practices and working relationships.
- 4.9. Partners and staff are required to adhere to this policy and principles in all aspects of their working life, including service to clients, and relationships with clients, suppliers and others outside the firm.

## **5. Responsibilities**

- 5.1. Weightmans has a responsibility to all members of the firm to ensure that they are treated fairly and not discriminated against on grounds of age, disability, gender, philosophical or religious belief, race or sexual orientation.

- 5.2. The partnership will lead by example and ensure that the firm provides a positive working environment for all members.
- 5.3. Business Centre Managers will communicate with their teams the requirements of this policy. They will create positive working relationships and a culture of teamwork and respect within their teams. They will ensure that all members of their teams act professionally and appropriately.
- 5.4. All members of the firm have an individual responsibility to ensure that they adhere to the policy and the spirit of equality and diversity. Individual employees and partners are encouraged to come forward and raise, in confidence, any concerns they have about behaviours or practices they have witnessed or experienced which are contrary to this policy.
- 5.5. The HR and Development team will maintain this and associated policies, monitor the implementation and impact and perform regular reviews. The team will communicate the policies and provide training. They will keep up to date with the statutory framework and best practice developments.

## **6. Communication and Awareness**

- 6.1. This policy is published on the Intranet and is accessible to all partners and staff. In addition, the policy is available externally to clients, suppliers and other interested parties, on request.
- 6.2. At induction, new members of the firm receive training on the Firm's commitment to equality and diversity, their responsibilities and rights. Similarly newly promoted partners and managers are trained in their changing responsibilities and roles.
- 6.3. Diversity awareness training will be incorporated into the annual training calendar.
- 6.4. Business Centre Managers and Team Managers will be trained in people management practices such as recruitment and managing flexible working.
- 6.5. Individuals who are in breach of this or associated policies and working practices will receive appropriate awareness training and counselling, in addition to any disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

- 7.1. Information relating to the diverse profile of the firm is collated and published every six months. This is reviewed against relevant external benchmarks on a regular basis and appropriate action is considered, where gaps in practice are identified.

- 7.2. Information is collected at recruitment from applicants and successful candidates. This is treated confidentially and used solely for monitoring. This information is reviewed every 6 months to ensure that a diverse group of candidates is attracted to Weightmans. Appropriate action is taken if this information highlights unrepresented groups.
- 7.3. Feedback on equality and diversity issues is collected directly from staff through the attitude survey, and direct approaches to enable us to assess the effectiveness of our policies and procedures. Staff forums are soon to be established in all locations, which will also provide a further opportunity for collecting feedback.
- 7.4. Cases of bullying, harassment or discrimination are reviewed quarterly in terms of number and nature to assess implications and determine whether firm-wide actions need to be taken.
- 7.5. This policy and associated people management policies are reviewed annually to ensure that they are effective and continue to meet the aims in the most appropriate way.