

# Weightmans

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## Diversity & Inclusion Policy



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## 1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Weightmans is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation. Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our clients, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.
- 1.2 Weightmans does not discriminate because of sex, age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion, belief, or sexual orientation. We do not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor, and we build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.
- 1.3 In addition, Weightmans oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination including; pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities.
- 1.4 All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy.
- 1.5 Objectives relating to fair and inclusive practices will be included in all employees' performance indicators and will form an integral part of performance reviews throughout the year.
- 1.6 The policy is applicable to all employees, secondees, agency staff, clients, communities, suppliers and contractors, whether permanent or temporary. The policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with customers and clients. Decisions relating to customers and communities will be based on business-related criteria only and any irrelevant information will not form part of the process.
- 1.7 Progress relating to the policy will be recorded annually and a report will be presented to the Board.
- 1.8 There will also be a review of progress in relation to targets and actions.
- 1.9 This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the policy review process.

## 2 Business case

- 2.1 Weightmans' aim is to be an employer and service provider of choice, characterised by recruitment and retention of highly talented people who are committed to the success of the firm and service to their clients. 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. Inclusion allows our people to perform at their best, bringing their whole selves to work.
- 2.2 The core values which underpin this aim are:
  - Teamwork and respect;
  - Radical Transparency;
  - Enterprise.
- 2.3 The benefits of being a diverse and inclusive employer are;
  - Reputation as a brand for clients and talent;
  - Operational effectiveness;

- Talent retention;
- Positive financial impact;
- Risk reduction and management;
- Organisational growth;
- Business opportunity.

### 3 Principles

- 3.1 We will work towards best practice rather than just statutory compliance. Our aim is for the principles set out in this policy to become the lifeblood of the firm.
- 3.2 Equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion will be integrated throughout our people management practices and procedures.

### 4 Diversity and Inclusion in Practice

- 4.1 This policy has been developed with regard to statutory framework, and best practice. Information and guidance will be sought regularly from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Law Society, Ministry of Justice and other relevant organisations for best practice developments. Weightmans are signatories with Stonewall UK, The Black Solicitors' Network, BITC's Race at Work Charter, The Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter, The Mindful Business Charter and Social Mobility Index, among others. Weightmans will use these networks and charters to support all our Diversity and Inclusion Strands in order to instil best practice throughout the business.
- 4.2 Our recruitment and selection processes are designed to ensure that all candidates are assessed objectively against standard, job-specific criteria to ensure a clear and transparent selection process has been followed. 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 permanent, contract and temporary staff.
- 4.3 Opportunities for training, development and career progression are open to everyone. All members of the practice have access to a comprehensive programme of training, including job-related and professional development. The practice supports further education and opportunities for formal 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 based on objective and measurable criteria, related directly to the success of the firm. Measures to support and tackle underperformance focus on these criteria. Team 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 practice, 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. Please refer to our 'Dignity at Work' policy for further information.

- 4.8 All employees and partners should understand that they, as well as Weightmans, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients, suppliers and the public.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 A positive working environment is supported through people management policies and practices and working relationships.
- 4.11 When considering any alterations to the firm's premises, the partners will consider whether to make any reasonable adjustments, to improve access for disabled clients/visitors and staff. If a staff member has or develops a disability, wherever possible reasonable adjustments will be made to address the issue, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.12 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 practice.

## 5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 Weightmans has a responsibility to all employees and members of the firm to ensure that they are treated fairly and not discriminated against on grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.
- 5.2 The firm will lead by example and ensure that we provide a positive working environment for all members.
- 5.3 Team 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, diversity and inclusion. 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 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.
- 5.6 The Diversity and Inclusion Steering group will meet on a quarterly basis to champion diversity initiatives and review progress against the action plan.

## 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, diversity, and inclusion, 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. Team Managers will be trained in people management practices such as recruitment and managing flexible working.
- 6.4 The Diversity and Inclusion Steering group meets on a quarterly basis and updates on Diversity and Inclusion will be provided within regular communications. The D&I Steering group, along with the D&I Champions share regular awareness raising pieces, including podcasts, articles and webinars.
- 6.5 Individuals who are in breach of this or associated policies and working practices will receive appropriate awareness training and guidance, in addition to any disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed.

## **7 Monitoring and Review**

- 7.1 Information relating to the diverse demographic profile of the practice is collated and published on a biennial basis. This is reviewed against relevant external benchmarks on a regular basis and appropriate action is considered, where gaps in the firm's demographics are identified.
- 7.2 Information is collected at recruitment stage from applicants and successful candidates. This is treated confidentially and used solely for monitoring. This information is reviewed to ensure that a diverse group of candidates are 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 engagement survey, and direct approaches to enable us to assess the effectiveness of our policies and procedures. Staff forums are established in all locations, which also provide a further opportunity for collecting feedback.
- 7.4 Cases of bullying, harassment or discrimination are reviewed in terms of number and nature to assess implications and determine whether practice-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.
- 7.6 The firm treats personal data collected for reviewing equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection in accordance with the Data Protection Privacy Policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the firm's HR Privacy Policy.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary this policy, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.