



Morson Group

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Document Control

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Our Policy

The Group is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

We do not discriminate against staff on any of the below protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

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.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Your attention is drawn to our separate anti-harassment and bullying policy.

We will review compliance against this Policy on an ongoing basis and will carry out a formal review at least annually to ensure that we are meeting legal requirements and industry best practice.

Scope

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees (whether permanent, fixed term or temporary) consultants, contractors, trainees, seconded staff, home workers, casual workers and agency staff.

This policy and procedure does not form part of your contract of employment. We may vary this policy and procedure at any time.

Our Commitment

The Group is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity is maintained in the following areas:

- Recruitment and selection.
- Training and development.
- Opportunities for promotion and transfer.
- Conditions of service.
- Pay and benefits.

- Conduct at work.
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- Termination of employment – dismissal, redundancy, retirement.
- Working hours, flexible working and time off.

Morson Group will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination regarding the above on the basis of any of the protected characteristics outlined in Section 2.2, or of work pattern (e.g. part-time working or fixed term contracts). This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All staff should understand they, as well as Morson Group as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

Decisions based on section 4.1 are granted on the basis of individual merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act), and Morson Group are committed to encouraging all employees to take advantage of training, development, and progression opportunities.

We commit to take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. 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

Types of Discrimination

There should be no discrimination because of a protected characteristic (Paragraph 2, Our Policy) in any of the above areas (Paragraph 1 Our Commitment). There are different types of discrimination depending upon the characteristic in question. These are defined as:

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption.

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

We define direct and indirect discrimination as:

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination. Direct discrimination can also cover discrimination by association or perception. Discrimination by association might occur where a person is discriminated against by reason of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic. Discrimination by perception happens when a person is discriminated against because they are thought to have a particular characteristic when in fact they don't.

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. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This can include harassment by a third party such as a customer. Harassment is dealt with further in our anti-harassment and bullying 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.

Responsibilities

Our Board of Directors (the Board) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the HR Department.

All line managers must align their behaviours to the Group values and to the commitments set out within this policy. Leading by example they must ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal

opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

The people team has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training; ensuring that training and guidance is provided for our workforce through our induction programme and ongoing training and development initiatives.

The people team is responsible for agreeing targets and objectives with the Board and for monitoring achievement against these.

Working Environment

We aim to create an inclusive working environment in which:

- the individual differences and diverse contributions of our employees are recognised as valuable to both our workplace culture and commercial success.
- All people benefit from the right processes, policies, tools and infrastructure to enable them to give their best.
- There is no bullying and harassment or discrimination.
- Everyone is treated with respect.

Morson Group is dedicated to creating a workplace culture that and ensuring every employee works within an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all, empowering good relations between employees who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We seek to promote awareness and understanding of matters relating to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion through policies, training, guidance, and campaigns, both internally and with our external partners including clients, suppliers, and contractors. We are committed to ongoing assessment of our policies and practices to identify and eliminate any disadvantage or exclusion of persons with protected characteristics, and ensuring that our employees are provided with the confidence to discuss Equality, Diversity & Inclusion issues and raise any related concerns.

Breaches of this policy

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the formal procedure under our anti-harassment policy. If you are uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed you should speak to the HR Department.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Should the people team be made aware of a breach of this policy through any channels, for example as a result of informal discussion or observation, action may still be taken in line with our formal procedures.

Monitor and Review

The Morson Group people team in partnership with the equality, diversity and inclusion steering board will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

Moreover, we will monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues

Other policies referenced

MG/HR/POL/001 - Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

MG/HR/PRO/004 - Discipline Procedure

MG/HR/PRO/005 - Grievance Procedure

MG/HR/PRO/001 - Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Amendment Record

Issue	Issue Amendments	Date	Issued By
1	First Issue	01/07/2010	Becki Ross
2	Annual Review	01/07/2012	Becki Ross
3	Re-branding	01/10/2013	Becki Ross
4	Re-branding	01/02/2016	Becki Ross
5	Reviewed	01/07/2016	Becki Ross
6	Added Respect pg. 5	01/06/2017	Becki Ross
7	Added working environment section on page 6	21/06/2018	Becki Ross
8	Updates to section 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7. Addition of section 9.	03/10/2019	Becki Ross
9	Rebranding	01/10/2020	Joshua Stodel