

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1. **Policy statement**

1.1 The Firm is committed to the principle of equality and diversity in employment. We actively encourage equality of opportunity and promote respect for diversity and seek to prevent unlawful discrimination, in our relationship with our employees, clients and others.

2. **Who is covered by the policy?**

2.1 The policy covers all individuals working at or for Thomson Snell & Passmore, including all employees, partners, consultants, contractors, trainees, and agency staff.

3. **Scope of the policy**

3.1 This policy applies to every aspect of employment including recruitment and selection; our clients in relation to the delivery of services; suppliers; and community activities in relation to our Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

4. **Responsibilities under the policy**

4.1 The overall responsibility for the policy's implementation rests with the Management Board.

4.2 The Firm's Management at all levels has the primary responsibility for the successful application of the policy:

4.2.1 By not discriminating in the course of employment against fellow employees or job applicants;

4.2.2 By not inducing or attempting to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;

4.2.3 By bringing to the attention of staff that they will be subject to disciplinary action for failure to adhere to the policy.

4.3 All our people have a responsibility to:

4.3.1 Read and apply our policies.

4.3.2 Complete the available training.

4.3.3 Treat others with the same respect that they would wish to be treated themselves.

4.3.4 Not discriminate in the course of their employment against fellow employees, clients and suppliers;

4.3.5 Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;

4.3.6 Report any discriminating action to the Firm's Management.

4.3.7 To use the Firm's Grievance Procedure to raise an issue if they feel they have been a victim of discrimination.

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5. Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 We are committed to complying with the requirements set out in legislation – including the Equality Act 2010 – as well as the conduct duties contained in the SRA Standards and Regulations.
- 5.2 The Firm's policies are designed to ensure that no one receives less or more favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 5.3 The following are kinds of discrimination which are against the Firm's policy:
- 5.3.1 Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic;
 - 5.3.2 Associative discrimination - direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic;
 - 5.3.3 Discrimination by perception - direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic;
 - 5.3.4 Indirect discrimination - when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular protected characteristic;
 - 5.3.5 Harassment - staff are entitled to complain of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them;
 - 5.3.6 Harassment by a third party - harassment of staff by people not employed by the firm;
 - 5.3.7 Victimisation - staff member is treated badly because they have made/supported a complaint or grievance under the Act.
- 5.4 In accordance with our commitments we are a signatory to the Law Society's Charter on Diversity, which promotes diversity and equality across the entire profession.

6. Our People

6.1 Monitoring

- 6.1.1 We collect and monitor data regarding the diversity of our staff on a biennial basis in line with the SRA requirements.

6.2 Engagement survey

- 6.2.1 We survey our people and ask them to identify any issues that might exist with respect to unfair treatment or bullying and harassment.

6.3 Training

- 6.3.1 All staff are required to complete compulsory on-line equality and diversity training.

6.4 Whistle-blowing

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6.4.1 We have a procedure for reporting suspicious activity (whistle-blowing) and encourage our people to raise any behaviour they believe to be contrary to our policies.

6.5 Performance review

6.5.1 We include behaviour in respect of equality and diversity in our performance reviews.

6.6 Reasonable adjustments

6.6.1 We are committed to removing barriers for individuals with a disability and have a procedure in place for managing the process of reasonable adjustments.

6.6.2 Where a staff member requires, or may require, an adjustment to their working arrangements or environment in connection to a disability, they should initially raise this with a member of the Human Resources team. A meeting will then be arranged in order to discuss the nature of the disability and any potential reasonable adjustments which could be implemented to assist the individual in undertaking their role. Where required an outside specialist may be consulted to help advise on this process with the agreement of the disabled employee. Once an adjustment has been made its operation will be reviewed at agreed intervals to assess its continuing effectiveness.

7. Recruitment and Selection

7.1 We have a recruitment and interview process to select people based on their abilities and we train people to interview for evidence of competencies without judgmental bias.

7.2 The Firm's policies for recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion are designed to ensure that no applicant or employee receives less or more favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

7.3 The Firm will ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

8. Clients

8.1 We will treat our clients fairly and equally at all times.

8.2 We will not unlawfully discriminate against our clients.

8.3 We are generally free to decide whether to accept instructions from any particular client. Where we decide not to accept instructions, this will not be based on any protected characteristics.

8.4 We will take steps to ensure that we meet the diverse needs of our clients. Where necessary, we will devise procedures to deliver services that meet specific needs arising from clients' ethnic or cultural background, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disabilities, age or other relevant factors. We will do so only where this is permitted by the relevant anti-discrimination legislation.

8.5 We will take seriously any complaint of discrimination by or on behalf of a client and act promptly to investigate.

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9. Third parties

9.1 We will not unlawfully discriminate in our dealings with third parties.

9.2 We will instruct barristers on the basis of their skills, experience and ability, taking into account factors such as specialist expertise and cost. We will not accept instructions from a client to select a barrister wholly or partly on the presence or absence of a protected characteristic. If necessary, we will cease to act. Where a client requests a specific barrister is instructed, we will discuss the suitability of the barrister with the client and advise appropriately. We will take the same approach when instructing other experts or third parties on the client's behalf.

9.3 Any reference in this policy to our suppliers includes suppliers of goods and services to the firm or our clients, regardless of the geographical location of the supplier. It also includes any outsourcing providers and other third parties involved in the provision of goods or services to the firm or our clients.

9.4 Our suppliers will be selected solely on the basis of their suitability. We will not unlawfully discriminate when selecting suppliers.

9.5 We will take seriously any complaint of discrimination by or on behalf of a third party and act promptly to investigate.

10. Review of the policy

10.1 The policy will be reviewed by the Human Resources team on an ongoing basis to reflect changes to the law, SRA requirements and internal business requirements. A formal review will be undertaken annually.