

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

General statement

PWT Advice LLP (“the Partnership”) is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its own policies, practices and procedures and in those areas in which it has influence.

This applies to the Partnership’s professional dealings with staff, consultants, other solicitors, barristers, clients and third parties.

The Partnership intends to treat everyone equally and with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of gender, gender reassignment, marital status, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-time status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief or union membership status.

All staff members will be informed of this policy and be provided with equality and diversity training appropriate to their needs and responsibilities.

Regulation and legislation

In developing and implementing its anti-discrimination policy, the Partnership is committed to complying with the Solicitors Anti-Discrimination Rule 2004 and with all current and any future anti-discrimination legislation and associated codes of practice.

Forms of discrimination

The following are examples of discrimination which are against the Partnership’s policy:

Direct discrimination, where a person is less favourably treated because of gender, gender reassignment, marital status, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-time status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief or union membership status.

Indirect discrimination, where a requirement or condition which cannot be justified is applied to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse affect on one particular group.

Victimisation, where someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against the Partnership under one of the relevant Acts.

Harassment, when unwanted conduct related to any of the grounds referred to above takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment may involve physical acts or verbal and non-verbal communications and gestures. This will include physical, verbal and non-verbal acts.

Recruitment

The Partnership will take reasonable steps to ensure that applications for employment and consultancy are encouraged without regard to any of the grounds referred to above.

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The Partnership aims to recruit and develop the best person for the job and to create a working environment where individual capability is encouraged.

The Partnership will use any targets for the employment of ethnic minorities suggested from time to time by the Solicitors Regulation Authority as a guideline.

Promotion

Promotion within the Partnership is made without regard to any of the grounds referred to above and is based on merit.

Barristers and third parties

Barristers should be instructed on the basis of their skills, experience and ability. The Partnership will not, on any of the grounds referred to above, avoid briefing a barrister and will not request barristers' clerks to do so.

Clients' requests for a named barrister should be complied with, subject to the Partnership's duty to discuss with the client the suitability of the barrister and to advise appropriately.

The Partnership will discuss with the client any request by the client that only a barrister who is not disabled or who is of a particular gender; marital status; race, racial group, colour, age; ethnic or national origin; nationality, religion or belief; or sexual orientation, be instructed. In the absence of a valid reason for this request, which must be within the exemptions permitted by the anti-discrimination legislation, the Partnership will endeavour to persuade the client to modify their instructions in so far as they are given on discriminatory grounds. Should the client refuse to modify such instructions, the Partnership will cease to act.

All lists of approved suppliers and databases of contractors, agents and other third parties who, or which, are regarded as suitable to be instructed by those within the Partnership have been compiled only on the basis of the ability of those persons or organisations to undertake work of a particular type and contain no discriminatory exclusion, restriction or preference.

Clients

The Partnership is generally free to decide whether to accept instructions from any particular client but any refusal to act will not be based upon any of the grounds referred to above.

The Partnership will take steps to meet the different needs of particular clients arising from its obligations under the anti-discrimination legislation and the Solicitors Anti-Discrimination Rule 2004.

In addition, where necessary and where it is permitted by the relevant anti-discrimination legislation (e.g. provisions relating to positive action or exemptions) the Partnership will seek to provide services which meet the specific needs and requests arising from clients' ethnic or cultural background; gender; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief; age; sexual orientation or other relevant factors.

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Monitoring and communication

This policy will be monitored periodically by the Partnership to evaluate its effectiveness and to ensure that it is effectively communicated and amended/updated where necessary. Partner, Jo Summers, will be responsible for the operation of the policy.

Disciplinary and grievance procedures

The policy applies to all staff members of the Partnership. Acts of discrimination on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status, civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, part-time and/or fixed-time status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief or union membership status by any staff member, or a failure by any staff member to comply with the Partnership's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, will result in disciplinary action.

When any staff member has a grievance as a result of discrimination on any of the grounds referred to above the Partnership will treat it seriously and take action where appropriate.

PWT Advice LLP
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